SOCIAL STRUCTURE AS AN EMBODIED EXPERIENCE

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

An overarching goal of my dissertation is to delineate social systemic processes as first and foremost embodied, experiential processes. I argue that such processes manifest through and depend upon the organism's affective integration with her environment. Whereby, I delineate concepts like alienation and agency as manifesting through an affective intelligibility. Symbolic alienation, then, represents a circumstance in which institutional narratives purport moral or aesthetic truths that denigrate and deny the organism's affective understanding of a circumstance. Agentic growth refers to the organism's affective adaptation to an environment. Such growth follows from the process of working through experiential discordance (i.e., the disturbance of experiential flow or continuity) and manifests as a newfound sense of trust and understanding. Experiential discordance is an unavoidable occurrence because the organism-environment relationship is a dynamic one. If the organism is unable to mitigate and repair such discordance, she will face the threat of traumatization. Furthermore, those who disrupt the conventional-institutional organization or channeling of experience take on the character of dirt and thereby represent a dirty Other. If institutions react to the troubling, dirty Other by means of systemic repression, rather than genuine communication and reintegration, then said dirty Other takes on the character of shit. In such a circumstance, the presence of the dirty Other likely reveals deep, social systemic inadequacies and thereby ruptures the collective's existential confidence and praxeological competence.

DEDICATION

I like to dedicate this dissertation to Ziegen Davis-Chouinard, Roscoe-Davis Chouinard, Jenny Davis and Carol Chouinard. Without the love and support of these individuals, I do not believe that I could have finished this project.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is customary to begin a scholarly piece with a thesis statement. There is good reason for this. The writer who states a thesis upfront lends holistic clarity to the work. However, every theoretical project entails a set of epistemological assumptions. The affirmation of a theoretical thesis, then, necessarily entails the affirmation of particular assumptions. Although these basic suppositions are typically implicit to any given intellectual piece, the scholarly community does not regard them as secondary. This disposition is evidenced by the scholarly propensity to group seemingly disparate works by the assumptions they share.

There are two primary reasons for why this seemingly latent content garners much intellectual salience. The first reason is that despite the magnitude of their eloquence and sophistication, a particular set of theoretical propositions with faulty or lackluster epistemological underpinnings demonstrates little intellectual value. The second reason is that the underlying assumptions of a work may reinforce or challenge a reader's experiential reality. To understand this, we must acknowledge that epistemological constructions demonstrate a relationship with the body. They reinforce or challenge existential certitude and bolster or undermine affective-experiential stability. With that said, the present discussion, first and foremost, attempts to establish and make clear the epistemological ground upon which the reader will figuratively walk. Without further ado, then, the assumptions of the present work are as follows:

1) The sociocultural world is real in both the material and ideal sense and, therefore, constitutes a reality external to the individual psyche.

2) As forms of articulation, language, signs, symbols and any other mode of representation can, at best, approximate but never capture this reality.

3) As features of the environment, language, signs, symbols and any other mode of representation demonstrate a real force upon and within experience. These objects, then, are part and parcel of reality.

4) The organism's interaction with reality necessarily occurs through the mode of experience.

5) Experience is necessarily embodied and affective. This implies that the organism's experience of reality is also embodied and affective; which implies that the organism's experience of the symbolic is embodied and affective as well.

These assumptions present us with two key theoretical problems. First, having acknowledged that the organism cannot experience symbolic reality outside of her corporeality—outside of her affective constitution—how are we to understand the process of symbolic alienation? Second, if the whole of the subject's existence, both active and passive, is corporeal—i.e., if all actions (and nonactions) elicit an affective response—what then is the nature of agency?

Addressing the first question, we first acknowledge that alienation, here, refers to an experiential *distance from* (and perhaps *misunderstanding of*) the symbolic.[1] To say this, however, does not suggest that alienated symbols are wholly devoid of affect. Even within the symbolically alienated experience, symbols maintain an affective (albeit dysfunctional) presence. Symbolic alienation, then, is a circumstance in which a symbolic intelligibility contrasts with and does violence to affective-experiential understanding. Such is the case when institutional narratives purporting moral or aesthetic truths also work to denigrate or repress experiences to the contrary. With that said, the organism's *affective intelligibility* reveals her alienation; it reveals her embodied disengagement with an environing. Such revelation may manifest as a sense of mistrust or unease. Wherefore, the organism's affective intelligibility—although it is in dialogue with and in part a product of sociocultural influences—will serve as the subject's personal articulation of the real. Despite, or rather because of, this potential for idiosyncrasy, the affective intelligibility is always authentic (at least to the organism's present experience).

Moreover, a working concordance can exist between the organism's affective constitution and the symbolic forms of her environment; yet her ability to maintain this concordance without interruption is another matter. The point the reader should take from this stipulation is that symbolic alienation (as I defined it above) is not an essential

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[1] I derive this notion of alienation from Erich Fromm's definition of said concept. He states, "Alienation is essentially experiencing the world and oneself passively, receptively, as the subject separated from the object" (1961: 37). Hence symbolic alienation is the circumstance in which the organism's experiential understanding is separate or distance from the symbolic logics that inundate her present experience.

condition of the experiential. Likewise, the reader should note that the flow of experience cannot sustain the absence of alienation.

To address the second question, regarding the nature of agency, we must first acknowledge that agency refers to both the structural-environmental freedom to act and to one's personal ability to act (i.e., one's praxeological efficacy), which springs from and bolsters existential confidence.[2] A primary thesis of the present work is that such agency is possible because of emotion, not in spite of it. William James (1980) understood this well. His discussion of emotion employs a Darwinian sensibility—a sensibility that emphasizes the adaptive role of organismal functions. Charles Darwin (1859), after all, introduced the idea of growth through adaptive processes.[3] Likewise, James (1956) argued that emotion enables the organism's active adaptation to an environment. In other words, emotion grounds action—not as a stimulus-response relationship, but rather as the ability to apprehend and create a potential future. Accordingly, emotional engagement implies that the organism is able to act despite a potential dearth of contextual information or environmental cues regarding the appropriate lines of action.

James' (1897) illustration of an Alpine climber's expedition exemplifies this stipulation. As his story unfolds, James tells us about a climber who confronts a

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[2] This is my definition of agency and I believe it corresponds with the definition Giddens gives. He states, "I shall define action or agency as *the stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events-in-the-world*" (1993: 81). Yet I define agency with two dimensions, one referencing structural opportunity and the other personal ability, to illustrate that the opportunity for agentic action does not necessarily entail the achievement of said action.

[3] We should also note that Darwin spoke at length about the role cooperation in evolutionary processes.

potentially perilous leap. He further tells us that this climber, despite not having such knowledge, must *believe* in his ability to accomplish the feat. He explains,

> Not a victory is gained, not a deed of faithfulness or courage is done, except upon a maybe; not a service, not a sally of generosity, not a scientific exploration or experiment or textbook, that may not be a mistake. It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all. And often enough our faith beforehand in an uncertified result is the only thing that makes the result come true. Suppose, for instance, that you are climbing a mountain and have worked yourself into a position from which the only escape is by a terrible leap. Have faith that you can successfully make it, and your feet are nerved to its accomplishment. But mistrust yourself, and think of all the sweet things you have heard the scientists say of maybes, and you will hesitate so long that, at last, all unstrung and trembling, and launching yourself in a moment of despair, you roll into the abyss. In such a case (and it belongs to an enormous class), the part of wisdom as well as of courage is to believe what is in the line of your needs, for only by such belief is the need fulfilled. Refuse to believe, and you shall indeed be right, for you shall irretrievably perish. But believe, and again you shall be right, for you shall save yourself. You make one or the other of two possible universes true by your trust or mistrust, —both universes having been only maybes, in this particular, before you contributed your act. (59)

The belief and trust of which James speaks here constitute an affective-embodied understanding. As James highlights in the above quotation, "faith in an uncertified result is the only thing that makes the result come true." We may acknowledge, then, that affects facilitate—but do not determine—agency.

Moreover, agency is not inherent to the *social object* or actor, nor is it inherent to any particular socio-historical juncture or structure. We often see essentialist or taken-for-granted depictions of agency within much of contemporary sociology. High modernity theorists, for example, contend that the structures of the present age constitute a greater degree of agency than that of "traditional" epochs. Whereas these theorists—such as Zygmunt Bauman, Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck—acknowledge the systemic presence of alienation in the late modern age, they further argue that it is

concomitant with systemic opportunity. I argue, however, that if scholars view agency as a part of and implicated by the concordance that exists between a body and her environment, then said scholars should be suspicious of any claims made about opportunities that arise from alienating circumstances. In other words, alienation does not facilitate the body-environment concordance that makes agentic action possible.

Structure, the Embodied Experience and the Question of Agency

Zygmunt Bauman describes the late modern age as a liquid one. He employs this liquid metaphor to highlight the uprooted, ephemeral character of modern living. Bauman states, "'Liquid modern' is a society in which the conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes the way of acting to consolidate into habits and routines" (Bauman 2005:1). If we accept this claim, we may also acknowledge that the heightened dynamism of a liquid society will likely disrupt (if not wholly impede) the potential for a working concordance between the organism's affective constitution and the surrounding sociocultural structures. This stipulation corresponds with Bauman's idea that those who live a liquid life must maintain hyper vigilance and the ability to adjust to ever-changing circumstances, lest they suffer social and cultural vitiation. He states,

> In a liquid modern society, individual achievements cannot be solidified into lasting possessions because, in no time, assets turn into liabilities and abilities into disabilities. Conditions of action and strategies designed to respond to them age quickly and become obsolete before the actors have a chance to learn them properly…. Extrapolating from past events to predict future trends becomes ever more risky and all too often misleading. Trustworthy calculations are increasingly difficult to make, while foolproof prognoses are all but unimaginable: most if not all variables in the equations are unknown, whereas no

> estimates of their future trends can be treated as fully and truly reliable (2005:1-2).

Bauman rightly acknowledges that the structural inadequacies of the modern environment impede the organism's ability to manage information (i.e., faulty calculations, prognoses, estimations). Yet the language of information management does little to capture the organism's lived (embodied) experience. We should also knowledge that these inadequacies implicate the organism's ability to stay affectively engaged; the organism cannot maintain a sense of Heimlich.[4]

Consequently, the liquid life constitutes more than a circumstance in which the organism does not *know* how to act—how to plan appropriately for her future. If the issue were one of simply "staying in the know," hyper-vigilance, though burdensome, could arguably be a sufficient mode of being in the world. In other words, the organism could competently navigate the sociocultural world by readily acquiring and employing new information. But the circumstance is not such that the organism's primary difficulty is the maintenance of a contextually relevant knowledge base. As Bauman himself suggests, the liquid life is one in which the organism is unable to acquire the appropriate *habits* to functionally integrate with her present environment. I argue, then, that she experiences an embodied disengagement with the sociocultural forms that inundate her existence. Her lack of *experiential understanding* (which encompasses but is not semantically interchangeable with an inability to calculate and predict future trends), then, reveals itself as her most encompassing concern.

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[4] Heimlich, as I employ said concept here, refers to a familiarity that elicits confidence and security.

Such a disruption constitutes more than the functionality of her cognitive faculties; her affective intelligibility also demonstrates incongruities. Lack of knowledge does not threaten her ability to act, to push forward; rather, lack of (experiential) understanding does. A breakdown in understanding, then, threatens the very integrity of her being (a point to which I return in chapter three). Wherefore, I argue that a failure to understand interferes with self-efficacy and gives way to inertia. Looking to Bauman's work, we could say the organism becomes inert in a world that refuses to create a space for said inertia; liquid structures will not cease to impinge upon her. Praxeological inertia perpetuates experiential violence, undermines existential trust and approaches the traumatic (an idea I explore further in chapter two).

Yet the systemic inadequacies of liquid modernity have not engendered mass traumata. Most modern organisms seem to buffer or circumvent such a consequence. If we accept that the organism lives in a liquid world (as Bauman argues), and we accept that she increasingly confronts experiential violence (as I argue), how are we to make sense of her ability to cope in this world? What mitigating factors are at play?

First we should acknowledge, following Bauman, that the liquid modern world does facilitate particular modes of being and concomitant habits; the most pronounced being the insatiable consumer and her uninhibited consumption. Bauman (2007; 2005) explains that liquid life constitutes an existence in which the individual judges all objects and others in regards to their consumption value. He further notes that the liquid culture renders the organism's satisfaction impermanent. Wherefore, it would seem that a liquid culture brings the organism's affective constitution in line with the liquid society's ever

changing structural conditions. Hence, as an insatiable consumer she seems readily able to relinquish (throwaway) one mode of being to consume another. Could we argue, then, that the organism has achieved integration?

Before affirming such a claim, we should recognize that such a circumstance does not represent integration in the Durkheimian sense. Emile Durkheim (1893), after all, viewed integration as a cooperative endeavor.[5] The insatiable, liquid consumer does not demonstrate a communal or an accommodative sensibility; rather, Bauman notes, this individual disposes of others once they lose their consumption value. The implied logic of liquid culture, then, is that solidarity is a potential liability. Furthermore, the insatiable consumer is a quintessential example of Durkheim's (1897) conceptualization of the anomic character type, a disposition characterized by derangement. With that said, we should not confuse this particular mode of being in the social world, one that is liquid consumption centered, as harmonious or functional. While the organism can adopt (*but not adapt to*[6]) the role of insatiable consumer, she is unable to sustain a foundational sense of trust in a consumption-driven environment. Wherefore, we cannot characterize liquid praxis as agentic.[7]

Still, we have yet to answer the question at hand: given the destructive qualities of liquid living, how do we explain the absence of mass traumata in present day society? The answer, I believe, is that the liquid modern organism develops a prevailing sense of

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[5] This is made evident in his discussion of *organic solidarity*, which constitutes a togetherness achieved by means of a functional division of labor (Durkheim 1983).
[6] For the present discussion I will reserve the use of "adaptation" to reference the organism's embodied adjustments that contribute to the holistic functionality of her being in the social world.
[7] At least not in my present experiential-existential use of the term.

mistrust. While mistrust is far from an ideal sensibility, it enables the organism to cope. In other words, such a mode of being still constitutes a connection to the world, a reference point from which the organism can create and maintain experiential understanding (tenuous as it may be).

Nevertheless, the reader may remain dissatisfied with this explanation. She may note that not everyone in the liquid modern world conforms to liquid ideals and acts. The rise of minimalist movements (those who disavow the practice of commercial consumption) and mindfulness circles (those who stay in the know of and act in response to the larger social problems of modern living) serve as evidence for this claim. Affirming this contention, we may acknowledge that it is a mistake to assume the whole of the contemporary West constitutes a homogenous culture. But we should also acknowledge that some (if not many) contemporary, counter cultures constitute persons who are relatively inauthentic in their concerns—that their alternative lifestyles have less to do with a mindful challenge to the status quo and more to do with the desire to consume fashionable identities.

Still, to suggest that liquid modernity, or any culture, represents the absolute whole of a historical juncture is to commit a theoretical solecism. Generalizations of this kind give way to academic elitism. By means of such stipulations, theorists position themselves as intellectually and morally above a "complacent" populace. Perhaps the claim that the liquid modern represents the prevailing aura of or fear for the contemporary age serves as a more reasonable theoretical stance. Moreover, we may

refrain from a portrayal of the organism as a cultural dope, unable to resist or subvert the structural incentives of the historical moment.

We should also note that despite his disturbing portrayal of liquid society, Bauman is not a fatalist. He (1995; 2001) asserts that modern life constitutes a newfound potential for forms togetherness and concomitant moral action. Following Jean-François Lyotard (1979), Bauman contends that the contemporary period is one in which we can no longer assume the diffuse acceptance of any one particular narrative. Because the structural arrangements of liquid society change erratically and often, grand narratives or ideologies no longer demonstrate hegemonic status. The resulting circumstance, Bauman believes, is one in which the members of society can readily circumvent the dictates of convention and confront one another as whole selves, rather than identities partial to situational norms and procedures. Anthony Giddens (1991a) makes a similar claim. He argues that the contemporary epoch has given rise to the pure relationship, another self-referential form of togetherness. He states, "In contrast to close personal ties in traditional contexts, the pure relationship is not anchored in external conditions of social or economic life—it is, as it were, free-floating" (89).

I will return to and give an elaborate discussion of these ideas in the final chapter of this dissertation. Presently, however, I leave the reader with the following questions to consider. If we accept the claim that the present day organism lacks a stable sociocultural backdrop to facilitate and guide her action, how are we to understand her embodied experience in the world? Will this experience constitute a sense of trust or mistrust? Will this experience constitute a sense of security or insecurity? Such

questions intimate a concern for the organism's affective integration with an environment. The point I wish to make is that the organism's affective well being grounds her sense of existential confidence and praxeological competence.

With that said, we should acknowledge that both Bauman and Giddens give significant attention to affective experiences in their work. Yet (as I discuss in the final chapter) both scholars hypothesize about the potential for new forms of togetherness in a way that loses sight of the experiential body and its vulnerabilities. Ulrich Beck also delineates the contemporary world as one that facilitates structural potential. He contends that the contemporary age ushers in a dialogic imagination in which, "…the clash of cultures and rationalities within one's own life…" (2002:18) reflects the contents of an internal other. He elaborates, "The dialogic imagination corresponds to the coexistence of rival ways of life in the individual experience, which makes it a matter of fate to compare, reflect, criticize, understand, [and] combine contradictory certainties" (18). The individual, Beck believes, now has the opportunity to engage in a global reflexivity that incorporates an imagined, dissimilar other. Consequently, the modern individual can now engage in local praxis with global awareness.

Giddens identifies the historical moment as facilitating a global reflexivity as well. He explains, "Mechanised technologies of communication…. form an essential element of the reflexivity of modernity and of the discontinuities which have torn the modern away from the traditional" (Giddens 1991b: 77). Such reflexivity, Giddens argues, incorporates the global flows of information produced by modernity's abstract

systems. The individual now constructs her self-identity with a broad understanding of national and global affairs.

However, when we place embodiment or embodied integration with an environment at the center of structural analysis, we may acknowledge that Beck and Giddens' delineation of a newly emerging, "glocal" self is not without epistemological problems. I hold that Beck (2002) and Giddens (1991a) overemphasize the moral agency that emerges from macro-systemic processes given their portrayals of the modern environment (a runaway juggernaut and a world replete with risk). Such conditions are antagonistic toward the organism's primary mode of being in the world, embodied experience. Global reflexivity, then, is not inherently agentic. If said reflexivity threatens the organism's sense of "ontological security,"[8] the organism may respond defensively; she may affectively disengage from the other. With that said, a rupture to ontological security may very well lead to experiential growth,[9] but the organism must achieve this growth—a process psychoanalysts refer to as working through. In other words, we cannot assume that structural potential will manifest as advantageous praxis. Agency and growth are not inherent to any structural circumstance or historical moment. If the organism is to take advantage of structural opportunity and demonstrate self-

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[8] This is a concept Giddens (1991a) employs. The reader may find it interesting (or perhaps paradoxical) that Giddens acknowledges that the conditions of high modernity threaten the organism's ontological security.

[9] I hold to the idea that when the organism overcomes or emerges from an experiential-existential disruption, she achieves more than a functional concordance with her environing; she also achieves experiential growth. In saying this, I adhere to John Dewey's stipulation that, "…recovery is never [a] mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed" (1934: 535).

efficacy, then her body must attain concordance with the environment. This process involves the efforts of the subject and the social.

In making the aforesaid criticisms of the high modernity theory, I do not wish to convey the message that the structural conditions of late modern society necessarily hinder the individual's ability to function and are, consequently, devoid of any enabling potential. The message I do wish to convey, however, is that high modernity (or any modernity for that matter) does not constitute an inherent historical trajectory or historical end point—utopian, dystopian or otherwise. Although the high modernity theorists delineate an affective subject, they look to socio-structural arrangements and opportunities, rather than the experiential, corporeal being, as a measure of agency and growth.

To be fair to Giddens, however, we may still acknowledge that he offers an astute conceptualization of social structure. His (1984) stipulation that social structures both enable and constrain social action and actors is a valuable one. An interpretation of structure as such provides an apt connection to a sociology of embodiment. Embodied processes, after all, both enable and constrain. We may recognize, as Giddens (1991a; 1991b) does, that affective processes like hope and trust orient the organism and enable her to circumvent potential peril. Likewise, these sentiments may blind the organism to approaching dangers and thereby lead her astray. Also, the body's plethora of needs motivate the organism to engage in interaction and forge new connections in the world. Yet these needs are not infinitely plastic; consequently, the organism cannot adapt to any and all conditions to fulfill said needs.

Furthermore, the high modernity theorists are not alone in failing to analyze agentic action in respect to the organism's affective constitution. There is a great deal of sociological work that makes this mistake. I do not say this to imply that the disparate theories which make up the usual sociological corpus are homogenous reflections of the whole; rather, I say this to suggest that many theories share an implicit premise that fundamentally influences scholarly depictions of social interaction and experience.

Said premise is the Cartesian dualism; an idea that perpetuates a conceptual distinction between mind-body as *res cogitans* and *res extensa* respectively. The implicit presence of the dualism within mainstream scholarship demonstrates an ostensible absurdity; these works will, at times, openly acknowledge that a mind-body binary is problematic or outright false and then proceed to stipulate mental and corporal processes as conceptually distinct—as if an acknowledgement of the problem served as an alternative to the problem. We will likely find, however, that this contradiction is not the result of intellectual negligence or apathy, but rather an inability to see beyond certain taken for granted assumptions about mentation and its relationship to affect.

An Embodied Mind Is Not a Prison

Scholars often delineate mentation as a process that occurs above or even in opposition to affect. Contemporary discussions of social reflexivity are typical offenders. The Goffman school of Symbolic Interactionism, for example, places paramount emphasis on the *actor's* ability to strategically role-take by means of a ritualistic appreciation for embarrassment avoidance, identity construction and the negotiation of situational

definitions, but fails to fully capture the embodied nature of these reflexive practices. Although they emphasize the role of particular affects (such as embarrassment and shame) within social interaction, many symbolic interactionists portray affective processes as secondary to cognitive ones (Barbalet 2009).

The irony of this is that Symbolic Interactionism is, in part, an offshoot of Jamesian Pragmatism. Jack Barbalet (2009) suggests that while Symbolic Interactionists adopt James' notion of a reflexive self, they fail to capture the pragmatic emphasis upon the agentic character of emotion. When we look specifically to Erving Goffman's (1959; 1963) work, we have the sense that emotions are the reactionary outcomes of, rather than a means to, social interaction. In other words, emotions do not enable the actor to manage the situational context; rather, they serve as punishments for loss of face and rewards for status-role verification or elevation. Goffman's offshoot of Symbolic Interactionism, then, presents us with a theoretical subject who, contrary to our epistemological assumptions, does not affectively engage symbols; rather, she employs symbols to circumvent or control the affective (i.e., her feelings and the feelings of others). Goffman's theorizing is not without merit. Organism's do undertake symbolic interaction to avoid embarrassment. Yet the role of affect in social action extends beyond that of an interactional burden or sensory prison. In the next chapter of this dissertation I synthesize Goffman's ideas with those of psychoanalysis. In so doing, I attempt to illustrate an organism who affectively reaches for a connection to her environment.

Toward a New Understanding of the Body's Structural Role

Accepting Bauman's portrayal of liquid modern destruction, I contend that many present day institutions facilitate pervasive anomie. The organism's *inability to act* or *lack of efficacy* that results from late modern turmoil overshadows the newfound *freedoms* or *choices* made available to her from said turmoil. To be fair to the late modernity theorists, they acknowledge and discuss many of these dysfunctional features at great lengths. Giddens (1991a) and Bauman (2000), in particular, suggest that this epoch operates as a runaway world in which modern individuals have lost ultimate control. Their hope—although we may now recognize such hope as a dwindling one—is that the contradictions of the late modern age will facilitate the possibility for systemic restructuring and experiential renewal.

My intention is not to replace the hope they bestow upon modern structures with a newfound fatalism. Rather, I contest and renounce the conditions for which they are hopeful. They argue that the present age demonstrates the emergence of a new, radically benevolent togetherness: a the *pure relationship* (Giddens 1991a) that transcends moral dictates (Bauman 1993) and, consequently, facilitates a newfound respect for the otherness of the other (Beck 2002). I, to the contrary, contend that the *pure relationship* is an unsustainable fiction. We cannot approximate such a relationship in the empirical world; therefore, its conceptual use lacks theoretical intelligibility. Furthermore, such an understanding forgoes a genuine concern for embodied experience, which is existentially inextricable from the organism's cultural environing.

For these scholars, then, the late modern age constitutes a crisis that facilitates pervasive risk and anxiety and newfound possibility and hope. The fundamental premise of this thesis is that the conditions of the late modern age transcend or undermine the material and ideological constraints of previous epochs. Late modernity theorists derive this postulate from the postmodern postulate that the historical moment is one in which time and space have virtually collapsed and many individuals can now explore and discover new modes of being in the world. I accept this claim.

However, these theorists further suggest that present social conditions facilitate the opportunity for new moralities and solidarities that demonstrate a sincere concern and respect for a global or alien other. While I accept that such *sincerity* is possible, I hold, and will attempt to demonstrate, that the propensity for said sincerity bears no essential relationship with the present historical moment.

My theoretical stance is a meliorist one. In criticizing the late modernity theorists, I do not reject the sentiments of hope and progress; rather, I wish to break from a linear, deterministic construction of social development. I propose that the social world is an ongoing project without culmination. The epistemological decision to be made, then, is what conceptual reference scholars should use to judge the alienating or agentic character of a particular, historical moment. The late modernity theorists seem to establish the individual's *efficacy traversing identities through space and time* as said reference. Such a measure is not without intellectual worth; it highlights the political use value of particular structural arrangements. But how does it compare to the reference I have chosen, *the organism's embodied integration with an environment*?

There are several advantages to my particular choice. To begin with, it orients theory construction toward an aesthetic sensibility that resonates with experiential understanding. Theoretical discourse, then, may serve as a humanism in that readers can intimately engage with the epistemological constructions they employ. Secondly, the body serves as a conceptually synchronic reference point. Without such a reference, scholars may reevaluate diachronic structures without end. Such scholarship ultimately loses explanatory power to the principle of absolute relativism. The difference between structural enablement and constraint, then, simply becomes a matter of ideological perspective.

With that said, I now turn to the remaining three chapters, in which I attempt to further explore and develop the theoretical ideas touched upon in this introduction. In chapter two, I discuss the embodied relationship an organism has with an environment in respect to her ability to circumvent traumatic experiences and thereby maintain a foundational sense of trust. In chapter three, I explore the idea of experiential understanding and how this concept relates to the embodied experience of dirt. In this chapter I further explore how the experiential realm dirties systemic praxes and collective fantasies of purity. In chapter four, the final chapter, I attempt to apply the theoretical scaffolding developed throughout the dissertation. The subjects of analysis in this final chapter are Albert Camus' novel, The Stranger, and the Courts-Martial of Specialist Steven A. Ribordy. Though differing in significant ways, I illustrate that these accounts demonstrate interesting parallels with notable implications for a sociology of embodiment.

CHAPTER II

TOWARD A SOCIOANALYTIC THEORY OF ORDINARY INTERACTION: MANAGING TRUST AND TRAUMA IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In the discussion that follows I argue that a disruption to the psyche's ability to achieve and maintain integration with a sociocultural environment undermines the organism's sense of basic trust. Consequently, she may experience this disruption as traumatic. Because the relationship between psyche and environment is a dynamic one, a disruption to its concordance is a likely occurrence. Accordingly, the potential for trauma, although not always great, maintains a presence within the organism's everyday interaction. Most ordinary interactions, then, occur in a context in which the organism attempts to establish and maintain a sense of trust while avoiding or mitigating the threat of trauma. With that said, I delineate trust and trauma as representing affective modes of being; they encompass a great deal of the organism's holistic experience.

Furthermore, I suggest that we regard trust and trauma as opposite poles of a conceptual continuum. As the organism negotiates and manages her everyday life, she approaches one pole or the other. Such a theory has the potential to reorient contemporary delineations of self and society and concomitant discourses. Presently, however, we will limit our concerns to those ideas that contribute to or implicate our understanding of how the organism navigates the relationship between trust and trauma within ordinary circumstances.

A Proposal

The organism's experiential reach for trust and her avoidance or mitigation of the traumatic necessarily implicate both her psyche and the sociocultural environment. To capture the theoretical spectrum and nuance of the intersection between psychical and social praxis, then, requires a synthesis of perspectives. If we look to Freud's late writings, we may acknowledge that psychoanalysis was well on its way to becoming a psychoanalytic sociology—or at least divulging fundamentally sociological implications. Hans Loewald's work extends this trajectory; it comprises ideas, such as the instinctual oscillation between self dynamism and atonement, that signify the social connotations of cathexis and catharsis. In building this opus, Loewald notably works through the pitfalls of Freud's concepts without inventing new terminology and, therefore, a seemingly separate discourse (Chodorow, 2003; Teicholz, 1999). Moreover, he—unlike many other neo-Freudians who polemically eschew one psychoanalytic offshoot for another—synthesizes ostensibly different strands of thought into a unified whole (Chodorow, 1989).

The theoretical linchpin, however, that connects Loewald's work to the present discussion of "trust and trauma in everyday life" is his unique delineation of the structural theory of mind. I argue that Loewald's conceptualization of the psychic substructures: *id, ego,* and *superego* constitutes the following sociocultural relationships: *without structure, structuring,* and *structured*. To be clear, Loewald did not develop this specific typology; nonetheless, I contend that it conveys theoretical relationships that are semantically present within his writing. These relationships are as follows: the

structuring ego is an agency that organizes or channels affective energy in response to a dynamic, sociocultural environment; the *structured* superego represents an enduring structure that is the culmination of the aforesaid ego activity; and the *without structure* id represents the irreducible form of the organism's affective constitution—that which is without and resistant to ego organization and, therefore, sociocultural influence. Suggesting that the id is without sociocultural structure does not imply that it lacks any structure; its irreducible character, Loewald (1978a) tells us, is that of primary narcissism or the undifferentiated, instinctual will. Also, the structured superego struggles to work with, rather than against, the expression of id's irreducible form.

Integrating this understanding of mind into a sociological framework, I argue that the superego orients the organism's experiential navigation of social context. We may refer to the "development" of such an orientation as approaching *primary trust*. This form of trust constitutes and enables social action, integration and functionality. A rupture or violation to superego organization may undermine the organism's sense of trust. If said rupture is significant, the experience may be one of traumatization, which constitutes psychical inertia, experiential violence and organism-environment maladjustment.

Basic Trust as a Sensibility

The concept of trust demonstrates a strong presence within contemporary sociology. Much of this work delineates the function of trust as managing risks, reducing complexity and increasing predictability (e.g., Luhmann 1979; 2000; Sztompka 1999).

While these ideas are not without merit, we should acknowledge that they demonstrate a cognitive-reflexive bias. In accordance with a cognitive-reflexive emphasis, to demonstrate trust is to, "…choose one action in preference to others in spite of the possibility of being disappointed…" (Luhmann 2000: 97). Such an understanding assumes a one-to-one correspondence between one's "actual" preference and her "conscious" choice. However, with the introduction of common psychoanalytic ideas, such as the repressed wish and unconscious ambivalence, the empirical relationship between preference and choice demonstrates heightened nuance and ambiguity; consequently, their conceptual relationship becomes ever the more difficult to ascertain.

Also, the cognitive-reflexive depiction tends to focus on trust as a characteristic that a social actor confers upon another or acquires by another's conferral. For example, Piotr Sztompka contends that, "…trust is a bet on the future contingent actions of others" (1999: 69). The point that Sztompka wishes to make salient is that risk is an inherent feature of trust. On this stipulation, I agree with him; yet, I have a contention with his gambling analogy. Likening trust to a bet suggests that the risk of trust overshadows the agency it facilitates. Moreover, we cannot accept the idea that genuine trust (as a feeling) is a thing one confers. Whereas the organism may permit herself to be experientially open and vulnerable, she cannot readily demonstrate competence in or feel confident about her openness.

With that said, Sztompka does recognize that through the accumulation of particular experiences the organism may develop the psychological propensity to trust. This is similar to how I presently employ the trust concept. Thus, a distinction is in

order. We may regard the social occurrence in which one grants, but does not necessarily feel, trust as *secondary trust*. In contradistinction to secondary trust, primary trust is an affective disposition; it constitutes a somatically developed integration between an organism and her sociocultural environment. Furthermore, primary trust is less of a cognitive choice (though it does involve choice), than it is an affective signal derived from an *embodied* percipience or reflexivity. Such a disposition enables the organism to act in the absence of knowledge and in the presence of uncertainty.

I largely derive this conception of trust from Erik Erikson's (1950) notion of *basic trust*. Introducing this idea, Erikson suggests that the creation and maintenance of basic trust is not wholly dependent on the organism's attainment of "essential" objects and conditions. He elaborates,

> There are… few frustrations… which the growing child cannot endure if the frustration leads to the ever-renewed experience of greater sameness and stronger continuity of development, toward a final integration of the individual life cycle with some meaningful wider belongingness. (249)

The quality of the organism-environment relationship is fruitful, then, if it facilitates for the organism a sense of wholeness and integration. The organism requires a sense that she is in and of a particular environment in a meaningful way, in the sense that she belongs. In regard to her experience, the world presents itself as familiar; she may navigate it with *confidence and competence*. However, as the environment changes, the organism's sense of wholeness and integration may falter. The world becomes precarious and she responds with hesitancy.

If she loses a meaningful connection to the environment—and subsequently experiences the world as alien and threatening—her basic trust will dissipate. I argue

that this process of maintaining a meaningful connection to the world is the same process by which the ego maintains a connection between the organization of the superego and the environment's sociocultural structure. By suggesting such, I orient the discussion of basic trust toward sociological concerns.

Anthony Giddens also incorporates Erikson's notion of basic trust into a sociological framework. His articulation of Erikson's idea largely parallels my present interpretation. He states, "Trust in the existential anchorings of reality in an emotional, and to some degree in a cognitive, sense rests on confidence in the reliability of persons…" (1991a: 38). According to Giddens, this particular form of trust has important implications for modern societies. He explains,

> …[T]he nature of modern institutions is deeply bound up with the mechanisms of trust in abstract systems, especially trust in expert systems. In conditions of modernity, the future is always open, not just in terms of the ordinary contingency of things, but in terms of the reflexivity of knowledge in relation to which social practices are organised. This counterfactual, future-oriented character of modernity is largely structured by trust vested in abstract systems—which by its very nature is filtered by the trustworthiness of established expertise. (1991b: 84-85)

Trust in modernity's abstract, expert systems, Giddens elaborates, facilitates a newfound reflexivity in which the modern individual constructs her self-identity in response to global flows of information.

Furthermore, Giddens acknowledges that routine, social praxis stabilizes trust. He notes that everyday, practical action overshadows modern uncertainties that would otherwise threaten ontological security (1991a). We may question, however, if Giddens wrongly conflates the presence of trust with the taken-for-granted character of ordinary praxis. I contend that the organism may demonstrate a "tacit acceptance" of abstract

systems that are relatively hostile toward her experiential being. Moreover, she—despite the experiential violence she endures—may navigate these systems with relative competence. Giddens, at least implicitly, acknowledges this as well. Discussing the modern individual's experience with intractable, macro-systemic risks, he suggests that said individual demonstrates a secular sense of fate, "…a feeling that things will take their own course…" (1991b: 133). This sense of fate, Giddens notes, counteracts existential anxiety and subsequent inertia.

But what happens to those individuals who are unable to sustain a sense of fate and concomitant trust? Are they necessarily without psychical recourse? Before answering these questions, we should recognize that praxeological competence does not have to coincide with existential confidence—a circumstance I refer to as *primary mistrust*. With that said, Niklas Luhmann (1979) notes that distrust (what I would describe as secondary mistrust) is functionally similar to trust. Like trust it reduces the complexity of situational meaning. Likewise, I contend that primary mistrust is functionally similar to (and likely oscillates with) primary trust. It enables the organism to navigate her environment without traumatic harm. However, mistrust does not protect her from a (perhaps unconscious) sense of danger.

We may categorize the disposition of confidence without competence as well. To articulate the secondary character of this circumstance, we may adopt the layman's understanding, which identifies such a disposition as *arrogance*—i.e., one exaggerates or lies about her abilities. We may identify the primary character of this disposition as *delusion*—i.e., one *genuinely feels*, despite evidence to the contrary, that she holds such

competence. Together, however, praxeological competence and existential confidence represent the development and maintenance of a *meaningful* integration between one's affective constitution and the world that confronts her. To fully understand this, we must return our discussion to Loewald's structural theory of mind.

The Ego's Oscillatory Praxis

Loewald (1988) argues that the instinctual-affective will of the primary process oscillates with, rather than inhibits, the higher ordered mentation of the secondary process. This relationship is such that both instinctual energy and environmental structure facilitate, rather than impinge upon, an agentic ego. With that said, Loewald (1973a) criticizes the early psychoanalytic view for portraying psychic operations as first and foremost eschewing undesirable or harmful stimuli. Noting the work of Anna Freud, he acknowledges that much of psychic activity results in growth, not stagnation. Loewald explains, "Defense would be the ego's projection of its own status quo, whereas internalization would involve expansion, further and richer organization of the ego" (176). The ego Loewald presents us with, then, is an active one. He holds that it interacts with, extends into and becomes a part of the environment.

To understand this dynamic integration, however, we must acknowledge that the ego is first and foremost an organizing agency. Loewald notes that Heinz Hartman's conceptual distinction of the ego as a "substructure" of the mind and not as the whole personality drew theoretical attention to the ego's differentiating function. He explains that this distinction places greater emphasis on the idea that prior to her development of

"…identification and boundary-setting interactions…" (174)—the primary narcissistic phase—the organism does not experience her corporal self as a distinct object, as separate from the environment. This undifferentiated, global experience reflects instinctual-affective expression in its irreducible form.

Primary process mentation, then, is the process of dedifferentiation: a psychical move away from higher level mentation toward an undifferentiated will. In contradistinction to primary mentation, ego and superego represent higher ordered mental functions, which Loewald (1978b; 1988) describes as the psychic internalization and subsequent differentiation of extrapsychic objects and processes. Nevertheless, the primary process id remains an integral part of, despite being structurally different from, these secondary functions. Such a stipulation, though, requires a thorough examination of how Loewald (re)conceptualizes the instincts.

The Instincts as "The Life of the Body"

Out of all of his psychoanalytic writings, Loewald's (1971a; 1973b; 1978a) articulation of the instinctual is perhaps the most complex and least definitive. A reader may easily interpret Loewald's drawn-out, perhaps we should even say turgid, discussion on the matter as equivocal. His apparent lack of clarity, however, is due to his attempt to sift through and reconstruct Freud's muddled ideas on the subject, while simultaneously attempting to give breath to his own insights.

Freud defined the instincts as psychic representations of biological stimuli. Despite this, he would often treat the instincts as if they were their physiological

counterparts (Loewald 1978a). Loewald, unlike Freud, remains resolute in his definition. He defines the instinct as "…a psychic representative of biological stimuli or processes, and not as these biological stimuli themselves" (208). With that said, Loewald (1971a) still regards embodied processes as having pinnacle importance to the instinctual realm. He asserts that the instincts and "the life of the body" are conceptually indistinguishable and elaborates,

> The life of the body, of bodily needs and habits and functions, kisses and excrements and intercourse, tastes and smells and sights, body noises and sensations, caresses and punishments, tics and gait and movements,… pain and pleasure, physical excitements and lassitude, violence and bliss—all this is the body in the context of human life. The body is not primarily the organism with its organs and physiological functions, anatomical structures, nerve pathways, and chemical processes. (125)

What Loewald implies here is that we should understand the body and its concomitant affects—characterized by experiential lulls, hyperboles, punctuations and the like—in the language of lived experience, not physiological jargon. Such an understanding is consonant with Bruno Latour's (2004) discussion of embodiment. Latour states, "The body is… not a provisional residence of something superior—an immortal soul, the universal or thought—but what leaves a dynamic trajectory by which we learn to register and become sensitive to what the world is made of" (206). To articulate the body as a jumble of component parts, then, circumvents the rich meaning we may derive from delineating the body as that which is informed by and informs context, as an experiential means to subjectivity. Accordingly, to speak of the instincts is to speak of the body's contextual limits and potential.

Latour touches upon such concerns when he contends that the body serves as "*…an interface that becomes more and more describable as it learns to be affected by more and more elements*" (206). This definition resonates with Loewald's conceptualization of the psyche. Such a psyche, Loewald (1973a; 1988) tells us, *facilitates greater experiential understanding as it incorporates and differentiates* more objects. If we disregard Loewald's reliance upon a Cartesian dualism then we may come to recognize that the two definitions are one and the same. Returning to the theory of the mind, we might say that as the organism undertakes secondary process mentation, she develops a new way to experience, a new bodied awareness; increasing differentiation of self and the world of objects characterizes such an experience. With her new awareness (or rather her new way of being aware), she obfuscates, but does not relinquish, the prior one: an undifferentiated, instinctual awareness (i.e., an awareness articulated by the primary process will).

Before we accept these claims, however, we must acknowledge that Loewald (1971a) obstinately, and somewhat paradoxically, contends that the body must remain conceptually distinct from the psyche. He explains that this division is necessary for maintaining psychology (and therefore psychoanalysis) as a distinct discipline. I believe my discussion thus far demonstrates that I have no intention to maintain the integrity of a stand alone discourse. The idea that an experiential being does not have a body, but rather is a body, grounds my present theoretical efforts. Hence, I adopt a lexically unbound, relational perspective that treats mind, body and environment as co-constituted entities (see Blackman and Venn 2010).

Loewald's idea that instinctual energy constitutes the psyche seems well suited for such a perspective. Loewald states:

> In contradistinction to Freud's thought…, I do not speak of biological stimuli impinging on a ready made 'psychic apparatus' in which their psychic representatives are thus created, but of interactional biological processes that find higher organization on levels which we have come to call psychic life. (1978a: 208)

The instincts with which we are left, then, enable psychic functioning—specifically the higher ordered ego and superego. Loewald explains, "…the original wholeness [of the primary process] is kept alive by an articulating integration that makes a textured totality out of a global one. What was homogeneous becomes a manifold whose elements are linked together" (196). By way of analogy we may compare Loewald's model of psychic development to the act of sculpting clay. By giving the clay form, the sculptor transforms the clay into art. With said transformation, the clay—or rather its relationship to the world—receives new (secondary) complexity and meaning. However, if the properties of clay were to breakdown, the sculpture would crumble. Clay, like the instincts, maintains a specific quality prior to and after receiving artistic form. Like the irreducible properties of clay, we may acknowledge that the synchronic id—the global, undifferentiated will— maintains a presence within the diachronic superego—the fluctuating, sociocultural texture of affective energy. Secondary process, then, is an experiential texture that continually emerges, but never becomes distinct, from the primary process (with which it will continue to oscillate).

Furthermore, superego organization reflects the integration between an organism's embodied experience and the sociocultural structure she enacts. As

suggested previously, this integration occurs through the process of object incorporation (perhaps for our sociological purposes we should say pattern incorporation) and psychical differentiation. The psyche's incorporation of any given structure is functional, then, if it enables the organism to adapt to and integrate with the environment in a way that does not cause her experiential harm. Addressing the same process from a different conceptual angle, we may say that social praxis (which facilitates incorporation) is sublimatory if it constitutes the intelligible expression of cultural form without committing violence against "the life of the body." Only when the organism achieves sublimation (when her enactment of sociocultural form lends satisfactory expression to her embodied experience) may we regard the structural features of the environment as agentic.

The organism, as we now know, accomplishes this through the formation of a superego. This resonates with Loewald's (1988) stipulation that both ego and superego are forms of sublimation. In service to the id (and the organism), they provide organized channels of affective expression (and therefore assuage and circumvent experiential violence). Yet, scholars typically do not discuss or emphasize the superego's sublimatory role. This is likely because Freud (1923; 1931) and his followers regarded moral prohibition as the superego's primary function. In so doing, they fail to acknowledge that the development of a morality system does not in and of itself fulfill an organismic need. What, then, is the function of a moralizing agency? To be clear, I am not questioning the function of a *morality system independent from the embodied psyche.* Some scholars may find this question interesting, but it is not relevant to my

present concerns. What I seek to explain is the organismic *function* of a psychically embedded morality. Why would the organism *need* this apparatus?

Simply looking to Freud's (1931) thesis in *Civilization and its Discontents*, we recognize that the organism's psychic incorporation of sociocultural principles will necessarily operate as a process of self-harm. In other words, the moral prohibitions of a culture will have what is an ostensibly pathological quality since they inhibit satisfactory expression of the organism's instinctual drive. But this idea downplays culture's enabling, sublimation-inducing features. Because the organism psychically incorporates cultural virtues, norms, mores and taboos, she is able to adapt to and integrate with her environment in a way that facilitates symbolic-affective expression and understanding in interaction.

This postulate lends new meaning to Freud's thesis. The seemingly inevitable discontent that pervades modern civilization may be an indication of the organism's inability to wholly adapt to and integrate with her environment. Sociocultural structures do not or cannot accommodate *the irreducible character* of "the life of the body" (i.e., the without structure id). Also, the environment is necessarily dynamic and to some extent unpredictable; consequently, embodiment and sociocultural praxis will periodically misalign. Such an experience elicits a primary process response. The undifferentiated organization of instinctual-affective energy draws all of the organism's embodied attention to a unitary mode of experience. This unitary experience may be one of intense passion, joy or a number of other affective dispositions. But in the

circumstance of misalignment, the affective message is usually a warning and will constitute a form of anxiety.

The ego's work, then, is never done. As a *structuring*, adaptive agency, the ego works to continually restructure an existing structure, the *structured* superego. In restructuring, the ego dedifferentiates—brings the psyche closer to the primary process will—and, subsequently, (re)differentiates—internalizes the structures that will facilitate a new psychic stability. In so doing, the ego restores primary trust. We should not, however, confuse stability with stasis. The superego must maintain a certain level of dynamism to remain integrated with a dynamic environment. Whatever level of integration the organism achieves, her superego organization remains susceptible to rupture and she to traumatization.

The Traumatic Experience

Although there are some noteworthy, sociological works on psychic trauma (e.g., Alexander et al. 2004; Prager 2003; 2008), current sociology largely lacks a substantive discourse on the topic. The psychoanalytic discussions of trauma, however, are plentiful and nuanced. Since Freud's seminal theory of seduction, the trauma concept has undergone a number of revisions (Bacciagaluppi 2011), but these revisions (on the whole) have not given way to conceptual clarity and general understanding (Smelser 2004). Henry Krystal (1978) suggests that one such confusion likely arises from Freud's development of two ostensibly separate conceptions of trauma: the traumatic state and

pathogenesis. The former refers to the experience of an unbearable situation and the latter to the accumulation of unacceptable impulses.

Krystal also notes that Freud and Josef Breuer attempted to reconcile the two understandings with the conceptual use of partial trauma, an economic articulation of the stimulus-affective response to traumatic breaches. The argument being that partial traumas accumulate until they produce a traumatic effect. The problem with said metaphor, however, is that it demonstrates a strong potential for reification. Conceptually, the process of pathogenesis may become an additive one in which the accumulated transgression of an objective threshold represents the pure standard for the traumatic state or experience. Whereas such a conceptualization may be theoretically cogent, we must acknowledge, as John Dewey (1896) notes, that there is no essential break or boundary that separates the psychological stimulus from its response.

Speaking pragmatically, I contend that traumatization may be without a clear beginning and end; wherefore, we should avoid locating the traumatic within a specific event or series of events. To accomplish this, we may regard the traumatic as an ideal type. The use of an ideal typical construct illuminates, rather than models, the empirical; it provides a conceptual reference point against which we may evaluate to what extent the functional consequences of a particular experience *approach* (rather than achieve) the traumatic.

Such an articulation of trauma is ancillary to, yet qualitatively different from, the concepts *strain trauma* (Kris 1956) and *cumulative trauma* (Khan 1963). Whereas the present conceptualization permits a concern for the incremental weakening of the ego

over time, it also suggests that every protracted strain and situational breach experientially points to total ego incapacitation and concomitant consequences. This idea fits well within a Loewaldian discourse. Loewald, after all, emphasizes the ego's organizational and integrative functions. He states, "'Traumatic,' then, is any experience with which the immature ego is yet unable to cope by abreaction or associative absorption… and an experience that would need such an ego response for an adequate discharge of the amount of excitation involved" (1953: 37). Loewald's conceptual use of "immature" here does not necessarily mean "underdeveloped." He explains that an "immature" ego can also be the consequence of a psychical regression following a debilitating experience. Because an immature ego cannot achieve adequate abreaction and associative absorption, the potential for experiential violence is high.

Hence, the precise socio-analytic meaning I give to the ideal typical conception of trauma is *the incapacitation of the organism's ego functions—i.e., the inability to incorporate and organize extrapsychic contents and subsequently adapt to and integrate with an environment.* Looking to the empirical world, we will not find this exact disposition in any one living, cognizant individual. As I have already implied, my focus here has less to do with the experience of a traumatic event or the hysterical aftereffects of said event, and more to do with how the organism manages *the potential for* and *her anticipation of* the traumatic. I argue that she will continually confront and attempt to mitigate annihilation anxiety (Hurvich 2003). Her development of primary trust stands as the ideal means by which she may cope with said anxiety.

With that said, the potential for trauma is an implicit concern within many sociological discussions of trust. There is good reason for this. Theories of trust typically demonstrate a Durkheimian sensibility. Emile Durkheim (1893; 1912) sought to explicate the processes of social integration and structural functionality. In such a discourse the traumatic tends to become secondary, but it need not be.[10] As I will explain, sublimated trust—in addition to being foundational to social action—is foundational to the organism's basic sense of well being. Just as sociologists recognize that the organism's shared, phenomenological reality is fragile, so too is her sense of confidence and security in an environment. Consequently, the traumatic lurks just beneath the surface of an ostensibly sturdy, social veneer. The organism's persistent anticipation of these events—the enduring angst of an undeniable vulnerability—requires that she maneuver through the everyday encounter with care.

We must keep in mind, then, that the organism does not (in day-to-day praxis) experience an *anticipation of trauma* as traumatic; rather, said experience may take on an unsettling or uncanny presence.[11] The organism is periodically, but not chronically, *ill at ease*. This experience is visceral, but not necessarily conscious (in the cognitive sense); it is experientially inchoate. However, if in ordinary, everyday praxis the organism successfully maintains primary trust, then the persistent potential for trauma will not likely result in symptom formation (e.g., maladaptive neuroses).

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[10] Although we should also recognize that Durkheim conceived of anomie, which reflects a traumatic disposition.

[11] Yet we should also acknowledge that the experience of anticipation alone can traumatize the organism.

Potential Trauma and Strategic Action

Concepts like trauma and ordinary praxis are ostensibly the unlikeliest of bedfellows. Erving Goffman (1959) and Harold Garfinkel (1967), however, challenge the layman's conflation of the ordinary and the insignificant. Their theoretical works demonstrate an implicit concern for the traumatic in normal, everyday interaction. To understand this we must first acknowledge that these authors regard the violation to the organism's expectations as a rupture to her sense of reality. Garfinkel illustrates such an occurrence when he instructed his students to "breach" the socially constructed realities of their friends and families. He notes that many of the provoked reactions were emotionally intense and defensive in character. Presently, we may interpret the breached individual's defensiveness as an indication of her efforts to protect and maintain a sense of confidence and competence, her sense of primary trust.

The breach challenges the integrity of trust by undermining what Jeffrey Prager describes as, "The continued availability of fantasies of one's aliveness, wellness, and a more-or-less sense of one's own omnipotence and capacity for spontaneity, accompanied with a not-too-persecutory other…" (2011: 444). I contend that these fantasies comprise, in part, the structured superego. Such fantasies do not necessarily represent a form of psychic disavowal; rather, they emerge from and are ancillary to the intersubjective context of social praxis (Chodorow 1999). This stipulation parallels Goffman's emphasis on the fictional quality of shared meaning. For example, Goffman states:

> … [T]he world tends to be bathed in better images than anyone deserves, for it is practical to signify great appreciation of others by offering them deferential

> indulgences, knowing that some of these indulgences will be declined as an expression of good demeanor. (1956: 492)

We may interpret this passage as an illustration of how the participants within an interaction order may create and sustain shared fantasies as part of the normative infrastructure. The ostensibly ordinary, social niceties of this infrastructure facilitate a narcissistic distance from an otherwise uncaring world.

We may also note that shared fantasies protect the "sacred" character of social existence. Goffman implies such when he suggests that the seemingly irreligious, modern world constitutes a great deal of ritual interaction oriented toward the sacred management of one's *face*—i.e., " …an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes…" (1955: 213). He further contends that the loss or disparagement of face, a violation to the sacred, elicits embarrassment, shame and uneasiness. Looking to the literature, we recognize that embarrassment and shame may demonstrate a relationship with trauma. Thomas J. Scheff (2003) indicates such with the suggestion that shame signals a threat to the social bond. Bessel A. van der Kolk (1987) completes the theoretical connection with the contention that an organism will likely experience a rupture to her social bonds as traumatic. Moreover, Dianne Trumbull (2008) contends that humiliation is a traumatic stimulus that threatens the organism's narcissistic integrity. She conjectures that the defensive posture provoked by humiliation is a survival mechanism inherent to the organism's evolutionary development.

Such a claim, perhaps to the surprise of many sociologists, resonates well with Goffman's theory of interaction. Although he does not speak of evolution and human nature, Goffman (1983) unequivocally acknowledges that his theories to pertain to

interaction orders across time and space. Whereas we recognize that the rituals for coping with and avoiding embarrassment differ from one culture to the next, we may acknowledge that a *ritualistic handling* of embarrassment is ubiquitous. We also note that if embarrassment and humiliation are not the same, they are at least very similar (the difference being that of intensity). The underlying point of these connections is that embarrassment, humiliation, shame and similar affects serve as affective signals, which unconsciously indicate the nearing presence of traumatization.[12]

I have noted that Goffman does not discuss trauma specifically, but he does painstakingly demonstrate the inherent vulnerability of the actor's perceived reality. With the whole of her phenomenological world at stake, the actor does not have a narcissistic interest in maintaining her face alone; she also works to maintain the faces of others (Goffman 1956). Goffman emphasizes how this responsibility supports a symbolic order. I, however, wish to draw attention to an experiential one. The idea that actors negotiate and affirm situational definitions through symbolic interaction does not imply that the symbolic and the affective are mutually exclusive. Symbolic interaction is concomitant with embodied projection and introjection.

Arlie Russell Hochschild's (1979; 1983) investigations of *emotion work* supports this stipulation. She argues that actors employ *deep acting*, which refers to the effort to make personal feelings consistent with a situational frame. Emotion work of this kind, Hochschild (1979) argues, becomes manifest through the gesture; the present discussion regards such a gesture as part and parcel of the ego function. The ego, then, does not

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[12] We should also acknowledge that such affective experiences can, in and of themselves, be traumatizing.

simply organize and protect a personality system; it organizes and protects the whole of an intersubjective universe—which includes self, other and context. Ergo, the ego also engages the social realm.

Goffman's notion of poise is an exemplarily illustration of such engagement. From a dramaturgical perspective, poise is the ability to maintain composure despite a threat to one's *face*. Goffman explains, "…to appear flustered… is considered evidence of weakness, inferiority, low status, moral guilt, defeat, and other un-enviable attributes" (1956: 266). In the context of the present discussion, then, the practice of poise prevents the situational gaffe from becoming a significant fracture in the intersubjective foundation of shared experience. Hence, I interpret poise as process in which one demonstrates praxeological competence despite momentary or periodic insecurity. The psyche will internalize competent performances, which thereupon serve as a form of personal confidence. Wherefore, we will likely find that that the successful maintenance of primary trust often coincides with an ability to demonstrate poise.

Furthermore, poise is a collective (but not necessarily communal) responsibility. Goffman explains, "Resolution of… [a desecrated] situation to everyone's apparent satisfaction is the first [moral] requirement; correct apportionment of blame is typically a secondary consideration" (223). In contributing to situational repair, then, the ego assists and is assisted by others. Likewise, the psyche's maintenance of experiential meaning necessitates that it remain receptive to interpolation. Goffman iterates, "A social relationship… can be seen as a way in which the person is more than ordinarily forced to trust… [her] face to the tact and good conduct of others" (1955: 230).

Compulsory (or secondary) trust, as we now know, entails risk. If the organism's expectations of a particular person or institution are not met, if her secondary trust is violated, she may lose a general (primary) sense of confidence in social living. Returning to Goffman's emphasis on the need for resolution, we may recognize that more than one's face is at stake in ordinary interaction.

Loewald, too, places significant emphasis on resolution. He asserts that the need for atonement maintains a presence throughout the life-course. In making this argument, Loewald departs from Freud's centralization of the Oedipus complex. He suggests that prior to and at the heart of the oedipal tension is "a psychotic core, related to the earliest vicissitudes of the *ambivalent search* for primary narcissistic unity and individuation…" (1979: 403 emphasis added). Nevertheless, Loewald retains an emphasis on the developmental significance of oedipal conflict. He states:

> …[N]o matter how resolutely the ego turns away from it and what the relative proportions of repression, sublimation, 'destruction' might be, in adolescence the Oedipus complex rears its head again, and so it does during later periods in life, in normal people as well as in neurotics. (386)

As such, Loewald places greater emphasis than Freud on the organism's inability to fully relinquish oedipal object ties. Because the primal tension never achieves full resolution, this struggle persists throughout the life-course. Extrapolating from Loewald's model of development, I hold that oedipal struggles also occur within and throughout ordinary, everyday interaction. But before we can make the conceptual leap from a model of psychic development to a theory of social praxis, we must also note that Loewald further departs from Freud by suggesting that the Oedipus complex represents a *psychic parricide.*

Referencing the Webster dictionary, Loewald defines parricide as follows: "One who murders a person to whom he stands in a specially sacred relation, as a father, mother, or other near relative, or (in a wider sense) a ruler…." (Webster, 2nd ed. cited by Loewald 1979: 387). Adopting Goffman's Durkheimian sensibility in which the social constitutes a sacred realm, we may note that Loewald's delineation of the Oedipus complex enables us to move beyond a specific struggle with the father to a struggle with "significant" or "sacred" others, even if these others are institutions or collective representations. For, as Loewald elaborates, Oedipal strivings also represent the desecration of a parental substitute—i.e., that which resembles "…the bringing forth, nourishing, providing for, and protecting of the child by the parents that constitute their parenthood and 'authority' (authorship)…" (387). One fundamental reason for why this consecratory condensation may occur is that particular, intimate others are the agents of socialization; wherefore, the organism internalizes normative rules and obligations as an extension of these others.

Furthermore, the parricide metaphor does not imply an abandonment of sacred ties; rather, it suggests a transformation of these ties. Loewald explains,

> In an important sense, by evolving our own autonomy, our own superego, and by engaging in nonincestuous object relations, we are killing our parents. We are usurping their power, their competence, their responsibility for us, and we are abnegating, rejecting them as libidinal objects. In short, we destroy them in regard to some of their qualities hitherto most vital to us. Parents resist as well as promote such destruction no less ambivalently than children carry it out. (390)

What we have then is a process of destruction or turbulence (parricide) that facilitates adaptation and growth (integration and reorganization of oedipal sentiments). What we can take from this is that the internalization of any given structure (in this case a parental

figure) may entail a degree of autonomy from said structure. Accordingly, the integration between embodied psyche and social world does not necessitate the organism's subservience to convention; rather, the organism's ability (or inability) to navigate the dynamic, sociocultural environment as a competent, autonomous being demonstrates the integrity of such integration. Any psyche-environment concordance that an organism achieves, however, requires periodic repair.

I have noted that Goffman's notion of symbolic repair parallels Loewald's concept of atonement. Both ideas posit a particular emotion as central to the reparation process. Goffman contends that embarrassment is the primary emotion propelling the actor toward reconciliation; Loewald (1979), however, follows Freud in positioning guilt within this primary role. Though this difference may seem to represent a significant contradiction between the two perspectives, we should acknowledge that the perceived significance of an affect is dependent upon which particular facet of the organism-environment relationship is under investigation. Everyday, social interaction and the development of the psyche throughout the life course are two distinctly different facets of this relationship. Yet we may synthesize these efforts to investigate the reparation of primary trust and the circumvention of the traumatic—processes that concern both immediate and long term interactions.

To better understand the reconciliation process, we may look to how Loewald delineates the child's resolution of parricidal guilt. He explains, "What will be left if things go well is tenderness, mutual trust, and respect—the signs of equality" (390). For our present, sociological purposes we may redefine these relational endowments as

empathy, sublimated trust, and cooperation—the constituents of agentic growth. But we cannot assume that the organism will necessarily achieve reintegration. Loewald elaborates, "To the extent to which patients and others insist on cruel, inflexible standards and demands and persist in unconsciously dealing with love objects as incestuous objects, they fight against bearing and mastering the guilt of parricide by internalizing atonement" (389). Keeping in mind Loewald's revision of the Oedipus complex, we should recognize that the conceptual use of incest here takes on new meaning. Instead of implying sexual desire, incestuous refers to an emotionally stunted reliance that encumbers the organism's opportunity for agentic growth. To have an incestuous relationship is to demonstrate a psychical inability to relinquish outmoded structural arrangements or object ties.

Incorporating this theoretical scaffolding into a dramaturgical[13] analysis, I contend that an organism that bears but does not master famacide (the destruction of her face or reputation) develops incestuous social relations or identity claims. In this circumstance, the organism unconsciously relies upon social affirmation that is no longer available to her. If she is unable to master a violation to her experiential connection to a sociocultural environment, she unconsciously retains a reliance on what *was* a familiar, trusted mode of being in the world—a mode (or psychical organization) that no longer finds intelligible expression outside of experiential disavowal.

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[13] Dramaturgy is method of theoretical analysis in which the investigator articulates social interaction with theatrical or performance metaphors.

Loewald continues, "Need for punishment tends to become inexhaustible if atonement, reconciliation, is not eventually brought about by mourning which leads to a mature superego and to the possibility of nonincestuous object relations…" (389-390). We should not, regarding it and incestuous as a binary opposition, take "nonincestuous" to simply mean a relative independence from particular objects or structures. Loewald explains, "…the word 'atone,' literally and in many contexts, means… to bring to concord or harmony" (390). Accordingly, nonincestuous refers to *harmonious* structural or object relations; with said harmony comes growth and efficacy.

In the case of famicide, the organism must mourn and abreact the death of her face if she is to renegotiate and reclaim a new identity. What this means is that the psyche, and therefore the organism, is not inherently agentic.[14] The organism *achieves* agency through the process of working through. If she is unable to accomplish this—i.e., if she cannot renegotiate her identity claims—self-loathing and other forms of self-punishment will pervade her everyday praxis. Why, though, would there be a persistent call to action, the heed to self-punish?

The answer, following the logic of the discussion thus far, should be obvious; punishment is an attempt at mastery, a compromised abreaction. Loewald lends credence to this claim when he states, "Punishment is sought to evade or undo guilt" (390-391). It would be a mistake, then, to regard self-punishment as ineffective or irrational. The effectiveness and rationality of such action is relative to the alternatives at

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[14] Although we could complicate this stipulation by acknowledging that part and parcel of the organism's affective constitution is a will which enables her persevere.

the organism's disposal. If the organism is unable to achieve atonement and subsequent reconciliation, self-punishments fend off (at least temporarily) an otherwise insurmountable engulfment by negative affects. Although, we should note that Loewald—referring to it as a "short circuit"—insinuates that self-punishment is a counterproductive alternative to more appropriate action.

Outside of the therapeutic holding environment, however, the structural arrangements of a specific sociocultural milieu may be such that the organism—despite her better efforts—cannot engage a more appropriate praxis. In this circumstance, the existing sociocultural structures hinder, rather than facilitate, agency. This stipulation does not imply that the organism is entirely without self-efficacy. She is resourceful and uses those limited means at her disposal to take responsibility for her plight. Although the propensity to self-punish emanates from a faulty personality or psychical constitution, it originates with an agentic choice (among limited choices) and thereupon develops into habit. The initial compulsion is to action, not a specific action. The same holds for other pathological dispositions, such as obsession and delusion. Despite their destructive consequences, these practices are agentic attempts at mastery. In a far from perfect environment, they are the organism's (perhaps feeble) attempts at adaptation and integration.

With that said, we cannot, following Herbert Marcuse (1964), depict the organism who adopts the pathological praxes of her environment as a cultural dope—i.e., a "one dimensional," "happy conscious," automaton who readily resigns herself to exploitation and manipulation. This is not to suggest that the organism is invulnerable to

political and cultural seduction. However, when critically evaluating the sociocultural structures of a particular environment, we should not confuse her *coping* for *complacency*. We should also recognize that psychic struggle, torment, and resilience lurk just beneath an ostensible acquiescence.

Perhaps this is one reason why both Freud and Goffman delineate theories with a defensive or confrontational bias. The empirical circumstances from which they largely developed their respective ideas are exemplary of social environments that cannot facilitate a sublimated integration of embodied praxis. Using Loewaldian language, we would say that the psyche's primary-secondary process oscillation is not harmonious; the life of the body and sociocultural form are either not integrating well or an established integration is deteriorating. This discordance may elicit the pervasive sense of guilt articulated by Freud and Loewald or the embarrassment and shame articulated by Goffman. In either case, we may acknowledge that the secondary process organization of the superego pushes the primary process will beyond its means of plasticity—i.e., beyond its irreducible quality, the primary process id. As such, both guilt and embarrassment (and all negative affects for that matter) give experiential salience to the potential for trauma. The drive for reconciliation (or Eros) elicits the ego's defensive and adaptive processes to circumvent a potentially traumatic experience. Still, if the ego fails to achieve a working "integration," trauma will likely ensue.

Hereafter, however, we need not centralize the unresolved oedipal struggle as the source of the traumatic. Although Loewald posits that oedipal tension continues throughout the life-course, the concept—at least for the context of the present argument

—is too allied with a theory of psychical development. Because our present concern is with a fundamental mode of being in the world, we shall return to that which is fundamental to the Oedipus complex: the obfuscated, yet continually present, *psychotic core*. It is here, at the psychotic core, that the psyche faces the hazard of fragmentation. We could say that the psychotic core serves as an affective incandescence within the organism-environment dyad, periodically revealing the inherent *vulnerability* of the relationship. If we accept this claim, we should also accept the idea that the potential for trauma maintains a presence within everyday life. This is not to suggest that the potential for trauma is necessarily a salient feature of the ordinary circumstance; however, salience, we must remember, is not a synonym for significance. As psychoanalysts and toxicologists are well aware, the subtle can be quite powerful and even a diluted poison can have profound effects.

In summation, then, we may acknowledge that the psychotic core and its oedipal predecessor reveal an enduring discordance between the organism and her environment. We also recognize that their resolution or reconciliation determines the structural quality of the superego. For our sociological purposes, we may regard the *structured superego* as the internalization and impermanent solidification of environmental circumstance. It constitutes a working awareness—not just cognitively, but also somatically—that the organism employs to navigate her experiences in the world. On that note, we may acknowledge that my conceptual alteration of the superego function does not negate its traditional, moralizing function.

The Management of Trust and Trauma in Everyday Life

Trust enables the organism to undertake complex interaction and, in so doing, perpetuates the structure of social praxis. This is in part because trust mitigates the anxiety elicited by looming uncertainty. To trust, then, is to expect particular experiences or anticipate future events (Luhmann 1979; Sztompka 1999). This stipulation is compatible with Loewald's (1962) claim that superego activity demonstrates a future orientation. He describes this orientation as a process in which the primary process wish for omnipotent perfection transforms into a psychical temporality, "the ego's futurity" (51). The superego comes to represent that which is and will be, plus that which is not yet, but can or should be. This process occurs through a, "…magical [or fantasized] communion with an ideal authority…" (47)—that which one wishes to become. Adapting these claims to our present needs, we may regard this communion as the process in which an organism participates in collective fantasy work and, in so doing, psychically incorporates cultural ideals or sensibilities. If all goes well, she is able to anticipate a communal future. If this future is one of security (or is at least not characterized by danger), her competence will generate confidence and her experience will be one of primary trust.

As I have noted, however, such trust is on a continuum with trauma. The organism's everyday interactions bring her closer to one end or the other. On one end of the continuum she has a unified, structured psyche; on the other end her psyche is fractured. With that said, approaching primary trust does not free the organism from the hazard of traumatization. It may even increase the likelihood of such an occurrence.

After all, one without trust has less to lose than one with trust (Brothers 2007). The advantage of trust is that it enables the organism to mitigate and temporarily circumvent annihilation anxiety. Still, trust cannot reduce the inherent vulnerability of interaction.

Goffman explains that in interaction everyone is, "…a potential victim or aggressor …" (1963, 196). Although such harm may elude conscious, analytical understanding, it maintains an experiential presence. Insinuating a similar idea, Goffman states:

> And it is through body signs that persons present signify to each other that they can be trusted not to exploit these threatening possibilities. Only when these signs are received may the individual feel secure enough to forget about defending … [herself], secure enough to give …[herself] up to the merely-situated aspects of …[her] involvements. (197)

We may acknowledge the smile, the relaxed posture, the gentle, unobtrusive gaze, etc. as examples of said signs.[15] The organism experiences the successful reception of and response to these sings as an indication that her symbolic-affective intelligibility in the present moment facilitates contextually competent understanding and action.

As ritual demeanors within ritual circumstances, these sociocultural arrangements lend themselves to psychic incorporation, becoming part of the structured superego. Ritual praxis, then, facilitates abreaction and associative absorption. Loewald supports this claim when he states:

> The distinction of reproductive and recreative repetition can be applied to the concepts of primary and secondary process and can help elucidate the relations

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[15] We may also acknowledge that Baudrillard's illustration of the fake smile complicates this thesis. He states, "Smile and others will smile back. Smile to show how transparent, how candid you are. Smile if you have nothing to say. Most of all, do not hide the fact you have nothing to say nor your total indifference to others" (1986: 34). In a simulacra society, then, the organism may view the ostensibly kind gesture with suspicion.

> between id, ego and superego…. The ego repeats, on a new level of organization which in our subjective experience and to our observation appears as heightened psychic activity as compared with the antecedent level, the processes which we conceptualize as id; the ego, insofar as it does not defend against them, repeats them in reorganizing them, i.e. recreatively. (1971b: 62)

Here, Loewald highlights that repetitions are not always pathological reactions, necessarily inhibiting the psyche's higher functions. The repetitive action, he explains, mitigates the presence of debilitating affect, allowing the psyche to reabsorb a troubling experience. Loewald derives this idea from the therapeutic process. He argues that through her transference repetitions with an analyst, the analysand lends novel meaning to and mastery over past and present experience.

We need not, however, limit the discussion of transference and "working through" to the analyst-analysand encounter. These processes also constitute the ritualistic praxes of everyday life. By saying such, I contend that working through occurs outside of and prior to traumatization. The interaction order represents repetition in which the organism continually works through (or manages) her inherent vulnerability and attendant anxiety. Thus, the ritualistic gestures that mature into habit and, consequently, a habitués—such as nodding, waving, smiling and the like—facilitate the abreaction of an otherwise anxious inclination toward defensive maneuvering.

Hence, a violation to ritual praxis may result in perilous consequences. Even the smallest of ruptures—e.g., the lover's gaze that is not met with reciprocal affection—may elicit debilitating terror. Every ordinary action, then, is actually quite extraordinary. The ostensibly benign may constitute a loss from which the organism cannot recover.

Concluding Remarks and Future Directions

Because the present work represents an inception rather than the resolution of a theory, the concluding remarks will likely leave the reader with more questions than answers. With that said, I hope to have presented the reader with fertile ground in which to cultivate further theoretical and empirical insights. I have attempted to demonstrate an inextricable link between the structure of the embodied psyche and that of the social world. As such, the categorical distinction between natural and social being does not serve as a viable dichotomy for explaining human experience.

I have also argued that the structure of social praxis is part and parcel of the ego function; however, we should remember, following Robert K. Merton's (1968) proclamation about structural substitutes,[16] that the ego is not dependent upon any particular social practice. For example, the ego may fulfill the need for existential security through the psychical incorporation of religion, science or a number of other social institutions. Part of the ego function, then, is the ability to recognize the usefulness of any particular structure and, therefore, permit its psychic incorporation. Ideally, the ego will organize and adapt the psyche in response to the changing nature of the sociocultural world. If this is done in a way that permits authentic expression of both affective-instinctual and sociocultural praxis, then the organism may achieve a sublimated trust in her environment.

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[16] The concept of structural substitutes implies that there is no essential relationship between a particular social structure and the need it fulfills. Accordingly, different structures may fulfill the same need.

To accomplish this mode of being, the ego does not content itself with intrapsychic alignment alone. It also shapes extrapsychic structure in an attempt to achieve psyche-environment congruity. This may be *one of* if not *the* primary motivation for the ego to extend beyond the confines of intrapsychic organization. Nowhere is this type of ego activity made more apparent than in Goffman's theorizing about everyday, interaction rituals; namely, his painstaking articulation of such concepts as *face-work*, *impression management*, and the practice of *deference and demeanor*. We may also add Hochschild's idea of *emotion work* and *deep acting* to this list. All of these concepts reflect the ego's attempt to assuage environmental uncertainties, which would otherwise facilitate experiential violence.

A potential problem, however, is that the ego demonstrates greater efficacy over intrapsychic organization than it does over the organization of the extrapsychic environment. If we are true to a Loewaldian perspective then we must recognize that the organism, according to the Eros principle, seeks reconciliation. Because the organism has little control over the environment, disjuncture between psyche and environment will occur. Interaction partners may easily repair a minor disjuncture, but significant, persistent ones will likely result in traumatization. Such a circumstance may, at least temporarily, incapacitate the ego—leaving the psyche exposed to raw, unorganized experience; psychical incorporation ceases and violent penetration begins. Hence, the organism requires the utmost diligence from the ego. Like the human heart that must remain beating from the beginning until the end of the organism's life, the ego must

continue its intra- and extrapsychic organizational work until psychic functioning has ceased.

Future work may investigate the premise that psychic organization is not a wholly defensive endeavor. The static environment is as beneficial to the functioning of the psyche as a drastically changing one. The experience of enduring stasis is the experience of boredom, a symptom of psychic malnourishment. The psychic nectar and subsequent satisfaction that comes with stability is ephemeral; in the absence of psychic growth, the organism will settle for destructive aggression (Fromm 1973).

Growth, then, demonstrates a peculiar relationship with discourses such as psychoanalysis and dramaturgy; traditionally, these perspectives demonstrates a defensive bias. Growth suggests that an organism may seek to change her psychical and/or the environmental organization despite how aptly suited and, therefore, *trust* facilitating said organizations may be. In other words, growth suggests that the organism is willing to endure some level of uncertainty. Subsequent discussions may explore what implications this stipulation will have for the present theory of trust and trauma in everyday life. Furthermore, the investigation of a sublimated praxis that results from the integration between an embodied subject and a sociocultural environment presents many intriguing avenues of exploration for a cultural sociology of emotion. For example, one may investigate how the present discussion challenges or is challenged by other discussions surrounding sublimation, culture and embodiment, such as Norman O. Brown's (1959) *Life Against Death* or Herbert Marcuse's (1955) *Eros and*

Civilization.[17] We may find that a thoroughly developed concept of sublimation has much to offer social theory in general and sociology in particular.

Lastly, we should acknowledge that the present discussion may contribute a number of apt connections to a sociology of stress. Stjepan Mestrovic and Barry Glassner (1983) delineate a sociology of stress in reference to Durkheim's conceptualization of *homo duplex.*[18] In so doing, they suggest that scholars need not depict certain life events as inherently stressful. The stressfulness of an event, they argue, depends on whether or not said event facilitates (or fails to facilitate) balanced, social integration. Future research may readily synthesize this idea with my present discussion of trauma avoidance and mitigation. After all, stress and lack of social integration demonstrate a relationship to the traumatic (Mestrovic 1985).

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[17]For example, Brown and Marcuse lend greater emphasis to the role of the libinal drives in their discussions of sublimation and culture. Also, Brown and Marcuse do discuss the role trust plays in sublimatory processes.

[18] The idea the human nature is both instinctual and socialized. We see this dual nature thesis throughout Durkheim's works, but he gives the idea direct attention in *Professional Ethics and Civil Morals* (1957) *Moral Education* (1925) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912).

CHAPTER III

EXPERIENTIAL UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENTIAL DISCONTINUITY

The present discussion continues from a psychoanalytic understanding of subjectivity: the sensate body's experience of corporeal frustration operates as a form of mentation which orients self to (distinguishes self from) a world of objects. We may find the origins of this understanding in Sigmund Freud's (1915; 1938) articulation of the process through which the neonate develops a new sense of reality. Prior to this newfound awareness the organism's experience of the world is that of primary narcissism, or an oceanic oneness in which there are no psychically distinct object relations. Embodying the primary mode of being, the child does not yet experience desire because her being constitutes immediate and taken for granted satiation. As the mother ensconces her with attentive handling, the neonate's needs are met without disruption; wherefore, the neonate experiences satiation as the direct consequence of her will.

There will be a time, however, when the mother denies or is late to give the neonate her breast.[19] The absence of the breast jars the infant. Psychoanalysis recognizes this disturbance as an existentially cataclysmic event. The disturbance irreparably scars the neonate's narcissistic holism. Yet the neonate's frustration (and

[19] We should also acknowledge that the bottle serves as a surrogate breast.

what is now attenuated satisfaction) coincides with a newfound subjectivity.[20] She comes to understand her corporeality as constituting a distance from that of the mother and the environment. The world now presents her with new opportunities and perils.

I employ this characterization of the frustrated neonate as a theoretical template upon which we may begin to understand how the mature organism develops novel understanding and subsequent praxes. However, I depart from a psychoanalytic epistemology in a significant way. Whereas psychoanalysis emphasizes the role of desire within and throughout social interaction, I focus on that which precedes and is fundamental to a desiring subject, experiential holism and subsequent discordance—particularly as it pertains to primary trust. Wherefore, I argue that the primordial distance between neonate and mother (and environment) takes on *experiential* meaning in respect to a will. Following the rupture of primary narcissism, the neonate comes to understand loss and lack. But loss and lack do not necessarily characterize her experiential microcosm. The will pushes for reconnection and the experiential rupture gives breath to new ways of connecting, to new ways of understanding, to a newfound agency. Within the context of *experiential discontinuity*, then, the will operates as an affective reflexivity; the dynamic that emerges from such reflexivity is novel communication between a sensory self and environment.

Where does the neonate go from here? Has she simply achieved subjectivity, an ossified self to enjoy for the rest of her years? Looking to vast social philosophical and

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[20] There is much theoretical value to Freud's delineation of the subjectivity-reality relationship. However, the rich theoretical nuance of this relationship gives way to a number of questions and conceptual tensions. As such, a full discussion of this relationship is beyond the scope of this paper.

scientific literature on the self, which gives breath to the self's fluidity and plasticity, we know that this idea of a once and for all subjectivity is not tenable. Even after the loss of primary wholeness, experiential ruptures of self, other and environment continue. Hence, subjectivities emerge and change throughout the life-course.

These later oedipal and post oedipal changes are not wholly different from the one initiated by the breach of primary narcissism. Looking to the previous chapter, we may remember that the breach of the primal fantasy introduced the neonate to a traumatic existence, one in which her annihilation became a possibility. How did she cope? Klein (1946; 1959) suggests that she split mother (breast) into two alternate objects or realities. What would otherwise be a single, volatile, precarious breast now became a good breast that remains and nourishes and a separate bad breast that frustrates and poisons.

In so doing, the frustrated neonate protected and reconstituted her subjectivity via fantasy; she recreated a reality or mode of experience characterized by a semblance of her past narcissistic unity. We could also say she recreates and maintains a socially rooted sense of personal Heimlich. The relationship to the environment once again entails praxeological competence and existential confidence. I have previously referred to this combination of qualities as the foundation for primary trust, but I now—moving away from a discussion of relational vulnerability—wish to delineate this particular combination in regards to the organism's experiential understanding, an affective intelligibility.

Praxeological competence and existential confidence, together, constitute an experience that approaches (but never achieves) primary narcissism. Employing the language of William James, we may now understand primary narcissism as a sense of holistic continuity within the tissue or flow of experience. That is to say, the experiential flow of primary narcissism is continuous (without breaks or boundaries). But as I have suggested with my introductory remarks, primary narcissism is not sustainable. Frustration of the will (the break in the flow of experiential omnipotence) inevitably occurs throughout the life course. In the most benign form of such experiential discontinuity, the organism confronts a phenomenological hiccup. Perhaps she experiences a temporary, uneventful period of unease and ambivalence. In the most extreme circumstance, such experiential discontinuity manifests as traumatic: the organism undergoes severe psychical-affective harm.

Like the neonate who splits the breast in fantasy, the maturing or adult organism undertakes fantasy work to maintain a semblance of narcissistic unity as well. We may remember from the previous chapter that when major or minor discontinuities occur in the life trajectory (or in the everyday flow of experience), the organism will create and maintain everyday fantasies of security and control to circumvent or mitigate potential traumas. We may also remember that the adult organism is not alone in this endeavor; she colludes with others. She and others carry out such collective fantasy work via experiential praxis.

To better delineate this reparation work, I again turn to Loewald's structural theory of mind, specifically the oscillation of the primary and secondary processes.

Having noted that the organism reorganizes her experiences in a way that partially recaptures the will's undisturbed expression, we may now note that the oscillatory praxis of the primary and secondary processes is a compromise formation. The secondary process organizes a reality that demonstrates a unity of experience reminiscent of the primary process. Although her experiences are no longer continuous, she attempts to recapture the incandescence of the primary process with a contiguous organization.

With that said, however, we must now address how the present framework compliments and challenges the traditional psychoanalytic emphasis on the erotic life. If the primary process will demonstrates a drive toward holistic experience, what then is the role of the libido or erotic object relations? I argue, with some qualifying remarks, that we may view the two perspectives: the drive for holism and the pull of desire, as complementary rather than contradictory. In making this argument, I—adhering to feminist scholarship—challenge the hetero-normative idea that sex must constitute some form of penetration or genital stimulation. Freud, too, seems to imply such a challenge when he contends that any part of the body can serve as an erogenous zone and that organisms engage in sublimatory practices in which they channel their sexual energies toward socially appropriate ends. But unlike Freud, I do not (for my present sociological purposes) regard these sexual practices as substitutory[21]; rather, I interpret them here as some of the many genuine expressions the will may take.[22] Whereas I hold that the will

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[21] The substitution concept seems to imply that the practices in question are of a second handed or inauthentic nature.

[22] That is to say, I believe the present argument lends corporeal vissitudes a bit more plasticity than the traditional psychoanalytic discourse has.

necessarily seeks expression, I reject any notion of an essential object relationship for libidinal expression.

Now penetration may conceptually resurface and lend theoretical salience to the sexual. Perhaps we will find that sexual feelings demonstrate their greatest intensity when the organism wishes to merge with or corporeally ensconce the pleasurable object or pattern. But such salience does not negate the sexual character of alternative activities. While we should recognize that penetration is conceptually useful for delineating and differentiating sexual activity, we may also recognize that said usefulness does not legitimize conceptual reification.

Having conceptually decoupled sex from penetration, can we rearticulate the sexual underpinnings of everyday life? I believe we can. Broadly speaking, sex is a visceral affair; it is a situation in which an object (material or ideal), person or environment engages the organism in way that elicits desire or (even if said desire is reluctant and/or unconscious) excitation of the will. Furthermore, we may understand this process as a partial return to the unitary integrity of primary narcissism; the organism affectively reaches for connection and continuity.

We should not, however, conflate the notion of pleasure with the libidinal or sexual drives. The two entwine one another, but pleasure or the pleasure principle captures both the *satisfaction* and *frustration* of the libidinal drive, which we now define as a reach for holism. Object relations theorists would articulate this holism as an integration between self and the world of objects. I regard it as the holistic organization of self experience, which assumes a world of (differentiated) objects. Libidinal cathexis,

then, need not imply that the organism wishes to consume or fuck the other; rather, she wishes to unite with the other in an experiential fashion that can and will take many forms (e.g., intercourse, friendship, kinship, etc.).[23]

Having redefined the libidinal, we may retain the psychoanalytic centralization of sex within social discourse. We may even envision a social existence in which libidinal relations constitute the opposite of and push away from the experientially disparate. Secondary process mentation then is not the subversion of the primary process will; rather, it is a socio-cultural recapitulation of affective satisfaction (i.e., sublimation). Such an idea will serve as a foundation for my present exposition of the difference between developing an affective understanding and the acquisition of symbolic knowledge.

To Know Is Not to Understand

From the previous chapter's discussion, we know that in the absence of secondary processes, experiential holism splinters and trauma ensues. Now we need to go beyond this determinism and explore consequences that overcome or forgo the traumatic. What then is the relationship between the experientially discordant and the potential for experiential growth? Outright, we should acknowledge that impeding the embodied will thrusts the organism into novel awareness; whence, she must reevaluate her understanding of the world.

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[23] It would be a mistake to not acknowledge Freud's (1921; 1931) articulation of the life instincts, which argues that organisms are driven toward social connection.

Understanding, as I use it here, takes on paramount theoretical importance. I conceptually differentiate the act, *to understand*, from the act, *to know*. The former refers to an experiential presence or an affective intelligibility that integrates the organism with an environment, whereas the latter refers to an analytical process (which may be concomitant with but is not a replacement for the former); although such a process is necessarily affective, it does not necessarily constitute an affective connection or holism.

The distinction between what we do not know and what we do not understand, then, is profound. Much of social thought fails to differentiate the two and, consequently, draws implications that meet dubious ends. Lack of knowledge suggests an absence of information. To have inadequate knowledge may lead to an interruption in symbolic communication between self and others; it may even lead to a rupture (but not break or immobilization) in the symbolic constitution of self and others. For instance, my student may not know the answer to a particular question asked of her, wherefore she may question her worth as an academic or my worth as an instructor. Despite her lack of knowledge, however, she understands the question asked, why I would ask such a question and the consequences of not having an answer (e.g., embarrassment, disappointment, ridicule, etc.). Because she demonstrates understanding, she maintains experiential continuity and integrity within the immediate context; a route of action is available for her to navigate the environment competently.

The student who does not understand the question I asked, who does not understand why I would ask such a question—does not understand the relationship

between the question and her present context—is an entirely different matter. Inadequate understanding or an inability to understand implies more than the disruption of symbolic communication; it implies an inability to ground experience, the organism's fundamental mode of being in the world. With lack of understanding, the fundamental properties of our *mutual* interaction break down and subsequent communication is rendered impossible or manifests as a form of violence. The very integrity of situational reality is drawn into question.

If my student cannot experientially understand my question, she has no means to engage me. This may be the case if I ask her a jarringly provocative question: "Have you, personally, considered suicide?" As a matter of knowledge, of knowing, she is quite capable of an answer. But as a matter of her experiential understanding, of her affective intelligibility, she may find herself (perhaps only momentarily) without recourse. The conventional inappropriateness of the question demonstrates an abrupt shift in relational intimacy. The contextual expectations and habits that were at her service are now suspect.

In regards to its praxeological implications, such a scenario is reminiscent of Talcott Parsons' (1951) *double contingency theorem*, which suggests that the agentic nature of social interaction presents the scholar of social life with an epistemological problem: how is patterned interaction to proceed (i.e., how is social order possible) in the face novel possibility. The solution, Parsons argues, is a preexisting normativity. The values embodied in a "shared symbolic system" provide for shared expectations (and therefore predictable) social interaction. Yet many scholars have criticized this solution,

calling it a form of cultural reductionism. For example, Raf Vanderstraeten maintains, "Already available cultural value patterns penetrate [Parsons's] action orientations to such an extent that the existence of a value consensus can be assumed in [all] interaction situations" (2002: 81). Likewise, Niklas Luhmann (1995) argues that rather than assume their inheritance from one generation to the next a more apt solution to the problem of order would explain the formation of normality and culture.

He further suggests that the solution does not have to pertain to the social dimension; rather, the temporal dimension provides a "functional equivalent." He states, "At first, alter tentatively determines his behavior in a situation that is still unclear. He begins with a friendly glance, a gesture, a gift—and waits to see whether and how ego receives the proposed definition of the situation" (104). In other words, one of two subjects may initiate interaction with normative presumptions, but these presumptions do not necessarily form the concrete foundation on which interaction proceeds. Luhmann continues, "In light of this beginning, every subsequent step is an action with a contingency-reducing, determining, effect—be it positive or negative" (104-105). The normative base, then, is a "working" foundation. It is amendable to situational dynamics, from which new systems of meaning may emerge. Such an elaboration upon Parsons's solution, Luhmann contends, raises the salience of contingency and, subsequently, chance.

Highlighting that individuals are sensitive to chance and possibility, Luhmann suggests that we need not regard value consensus as an essential feature of social order. Previously disparate individuals invent value consensus in response to a need to reduce

complexity (and therefore mitigate anxiety). Luhmann states, "The system emerges etsi no daretur Deus [even if God doesn't exist]" (1995: 105).

Although he circumvents the problem of cultural reductionism, Luhmann arguably replaces one form of determinism for another. Instead of reducing all interaction to culturally specific dictates, he reduces it to the need to process information efficiently. I will temper my criticism of Luhmann for fear that ultimately I too fall into the trap of reductionism. Suffice it to say that while both Parsons and Luhmann capture a facet of social experience, they fail to capture the theoretical significance of experiential understanding. They demonstrate such failure by assuming that the presence of normativity (preexistent or newly created) precludes experiential ambiguity and ambivalence.

Perhaps to say otherwise marries conceptual antagonisms or contradictions, but such is the nature of psychoanalytic insight. The laws of the psyche do not follow the laws of logic. Likewise, the experiential does not share the symbolic's predictive formalism. Thus, the normative (or rather the experience of normality) gives breathe to the uncanny and always carries the threat of traumatization. We may liken the experiential, then, to epistemological dirt; it spoils normative structure and clouds conceptual clarity.

In regards to my student, the rupture of normative experience hampers both the experiential flow between self and the world of objects and her unconscious fantasies of omnipotence. The ostensibly benign, familiar, reliable circumstance gives way to its opposite. She may experience the ordeal as hostile and subsequently withdraw from

future interaction, or she may regard the provocative question as a liberating reprieve from normal academic discourse and further engage the novel circumstance.[24] Either way, the disjuncture introduces experiential disorganization and new possibility. She must *choose* a path and reorganize her experiential awareness—her will compels her to once again become whole.

Employing the aforementioned epistemological assertions about sex and the sexual, the student and I—socio-analytically speaking—engage sexually. Our intellectual discourse is also a discourse of the will (our sexual energies are at play). She or I may rupture or frustrate the familiar praxis (and experiential flow) of the classroom, but we are not content with frustration alone. We work to reconnect, to reestablish an experiential continuity. In so doing, we are not simply mirroring the conventional. We *will* each other to understand. Our wills are not left without recourse. Social praxis, as I have alluded previously, is a primary means by which individual wills meet and find mutual expression. It is not a coincidence, then, that social praxis is also the primary means by which organisms circumvent potential traumatization—a topic to which we now turn.

Whereas social structure does not exist to circumvent or mitigate the traumatic experience (I am not trying to make an essentialist argument here), we may still recognize that such an occurrence is ideally one of the consequences of cooperative interaction. To understand this, we must elaborate upon the psychic conceptualization of

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[24] To be fair to Parsons, we should acknowledge that even in the event of experiential discontinuity normative social praxis (of one form or another) likely ensues.

the traumatic. Aside from representing an incapacitation of ego activity, the traumatic is an experiential mode of (or lack thereof) being in the world. On the one hand, it is the opposite of primary trust; it represents the obliteration of existential confidence and the obstruction of praxeological competence. On the other hand, it is the obliteration of a social (as well as personal) fantasy—which we must note is not exclusive from primary trust—that sustains the narcissistic integrity of self's relationship to her environment.

Shit, the Fantasy of Dirt and the Dirty Other

One such social fantasy—i.e., a fantasy that mitigates the traumatic—is the ritual praxis associated with managing the ostensibly traumatic horrors emanating from public bathrooms. Now we should acknowledge that this stipulation is an over dramatization. The experience of using a public bathroom may be one of displeasure, but rarely does an individual bathroom-goer feel the angst of potential annihilation. Although we may also acknowledge that this particular social realm constitutes the threat of experiences so unpleasing that a muted (perhaps unconscious) sense of peril—however so momentarily—blemishes one's existential confidence. This is evidenced by the many of those who make significant efforts toward bodily planning and control to avoid using public restrooms. While such planning and control is possibly a phobic response (and, therefore, represents aberrant activity) it reveals sensibilities that resonate with the "normal" population.

Public bathrooms, after all, constitute a plethora of symbols, sentiments and sensations that disrupt the smooth flow of everyday experiences. Perhaps the most

obvious example is the public bathroom's horrific association with *shit*. Although such a concept is crass, a number of notable works have undertaken the metaphorical and material significance of shit (e.g., Freud 1905; 1917; Laporte 1978; Brown 1985) and I will demonstrate that shit's crass connotation lends it a conceptual utility that is apt for the present discussion.

We may readily acknowledge that human shit constitutes a form of dirt. Mary Douglas (1966), the pioneer scholar of dirt in relation to the social, tells us that dirt becomes so by disturbing symbolic logics. Douglas, however, is not the only scholar to have something to say about dirt's relationship to the social. The literature surrounding cultural notions of dirt and concomitant concepts (e.g., contagion, pollution, abjection, disgust, stigma) is diffuse and constitutes significant nuance. Nevertheless, almost all (perhaps all) of the dirt literature (at least implicitly) centers on the idea that dirt constitutes a threat or actual disruption to the integrity of an established boundary or order. Douglas—elaborating upon Freud's notion of dirt—exclaims, "Where there is system there is dirt." The systemic, as I employ said concept here, does not necessarily refer to formalized patterns of activity, but rather collectively habituated ones. Still, I--like Douglas and other social scholars—understand system and systemic processes as entailing organization and boundaries. Whereas Douglas emphasizes the symbolic in discussing the integrity of these boundaries, I emphasize the experiential. Systemic boundaries, then, manage the integrity of experiential continuity or flow.

Dirt, although deeply culpable for disruption to the integrity of symbolic knowledge, manifests through and threatens experiential understanding. Returning to

our discussion of shit, the experiential presence of this foulest of matter serves as an ideal metaphor for understanding experiential disruption. Shit, however, is not readily subsumed by the aforementioned conceptualization of dirt. Although, we can be sure that shit disturbs symbolic logics, it—unlike dirt—never has an appropriate context. That is to say, even when shit follows appropriate praxis—e.g., it stays out of public view—it remains dirty.

Also, while one can clean or reorganize that which is dirty (and thereby remove its disturbing presence) one cannot confidently clean (or eliminate) shit. Even in the absence of shit, the phenomenological threat of its contamination remains. It is because restrooms have come into contact with shit that restroom users turn door and faucet handles with elbows or tissues in hand, cover toilet seats with tissue paper before sitting, and situate personal items with careful attention as to not come into contact with a particularly contaminating object. Such behavior occurs in the cleanest of restrooms. This restroom praxis bolsters and is in response to the fantasy of ominously omnipotent dirt, which may demonstrate greater power than material reality. What is at stake, then, is not one's physical safety or health, but rather her affective confidence—the primary trust she holds in everyday action.

Take, for example, the ordinary park-goer. What should be a benign, perhaps joyful, day for an individual visiting a public park becomes momentarily anxiety ridden when she realizes that she has to use and enter into a public restroom—or worse yet, a public porta-potty. The fantastic horror of a sudden need to use such a public space disturbs a recreational park user's experiential confidence and competence. By means of

her fantastical projection of dirt, she must confront an imaginary contagion (dirt, filth, shit, germs, disease, etc.) in the most intimate of circumstances, defecation.

The situation makes the vulnerability of corporeal boundaries experientially salient. Her primary trust begins to wane as she struggles to maintain efficacy over her corporeal purity. She may control the direction of her gaze; she may choose the surfaces with which she makes physical contact; she may even hold her breath or breath shallowly to mitigate the stench that invades her olfactory sense; but she cannot control her imagination, not entirely at least. In effect, the very techniques she employs to protect the integrity of her corporeal being also make salient the fantasy of contagion and concomitant danger.

What then is she to do in this situation of experiential discontinuity? What does she do with the sight, smell and (in the worst possible scenario) feel of shit? Well we should acknowledge this disruption is a periodic one and she already has an arsenal of strategies for coping with such a circumstance. She habituates her body to the discomfort of retaining excretal matter and simply waits until she can relieve herself safely in a personal, familiar dwelling. Or she becomes adept at psychically deflecting the experience of horrifying matter and concomitant memory traces. She may even develop confidence in the praxis of purification—e.g., the idea that soap and water removes all contaminates. But such circumstances do not constitute situations in which she reflexively engages the environment and develops a novel mode of being in the world. Rather such praxes constitute strategies of repression and experiential conservatism.

Turning our analysis toward a concern for the social system, we may now acknowledge that the collective copes with shit by hiding it beneath the normative, clean, safe infrastructure of society. That is to say, the social system deals with shit by banishing it. The praxis of shit then is that of collective repression, of coping by denial.[25] At the extreme, a delusional culture denies shit's existence, but more often the collective simply denies shit's unique intelligibility and thereby ceases genuine communication with (i.e., an effort *to understand*) the shitty. With that said, the situation that interests us presently is the one in which the organism does not deflect dirt (the discordant experience), but rather transforms and reintegrates it. Psychoanalysis teaches us, after all, that only with creative reintegration can we abreact traumatic memory traces and achieve catharsis. The creative reintegration of dirt, filth or shit, however, confronts a somatic obstacle: disgust. The academic discussion of disgust is vast, but not resolute. Those works that are relatively less humanistic reduce disgust to biological attributes (Wicker et al. 2003; Oaten, Stevenson, and Case 2009; Rozin and Fallon 1987). This deterministic articulation of disgust contends that the ontological result of evolution is the circumstance in which animals innately find spoiled or diseased matter repulsive. Yet the more humanistic works emphasize the cultural variability of

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[25] This idea is in many ways commensurate with Philip Slater's delineation of, "…the Toilet Assumption—the notion that unwanted matter, unwanted difficulties, unwanted complexities and obstacles will disappear if they're removed from our immediate field of vision" (1970: 19). Though the reader should also acknowledge that there are nuanced differences between the two concepts and these differences have significant epistemological consequences. Whereas Slater's concept emphasizes the systemic need to hide and ignore the aberrant and undesirable, the concept I employ here—as I will make apparent throughout the remainder of this dissertation—suggests active, systemic repression of that which reveals systemic inadequacy (and thereby undermines primary trust). With that said, future studies may employ both concepts as complimentary counterparts.

disgust. This is not to suggest that disgust is simply a learned narrative or an out cropping of a particular symbolic logic; rather, disgust involves the habitual, subconscious life of the body, which emerges from and is in continuous dialog with the organism's cultural milieu (Miller 1997; Seidman 2012). So one's relationship to a disgusting process or thing, like all disturbing relationships, can undergo abreaction and associative absorption (see previous chapter).

Returning to our exposition of dirt, and specifically shit, we also should acknowledge that Organisms are not necessarily disgusted (or horrified) by dirt or the dirtied. By saying such, I do not mean to emphasize that dirt simultaneously gives way to fascination or arousal. Rather the point I wish to make is that dirt or the dirtied may, at least in fantasy, constitute a plethora of experiential and symbolic opportunities. Through cooperation with praxis, dirt remains dirt (the dirty remain dirty) but may achieve acceptance and, at times, admiration.

Take the stigmatized though highly appreciated custodial worker as an example. Her status role is that of a low skill and thereby highly replaceable laborer, but to say such is to speak specifically to systemic concerns. Experientially, she reduces the everyday burden of filth. When others periodically and momentarily do not take her for granted, they see her as invaluable.

With that said, we need to remember that even when dirt or the dirtied receive admiration, they remain socially less than; wherefore, they only achieve attenuated acceptance. Perhaps we may regard such acceptance as an act of fetishization. I do not make this suggestion in reference to the seductive lure of dirt that Kristeva (1982)

articulates; rather I wish to highlight the self-congratulatory satisfaction of demonstrating a pious or moral demeanor.

As William Ian Miller brings to our attention:

> Humility is a virtue that can't work its way out of a psychological paradox it always finds itself in. If granting of rewards is based on how humble you are, then you find yourself in a system in which the attainment of humility provides the means for being looked up to by others and thus for knowing yourself superior to those who are looking up to you. You become proud of your humility and enjoy the payoff of winning the humility contest. (1998: 157)

We will likely find such humility contests operating in respect to dirt. In other words, with a high degree of social esteem at stake, we may very well find that one's association with dirty, contagious others involves the practice of *conspicuous charity* (Anderson 2009). In such a circumstance, pure subjects can circumvent the hazard of experiential discontinuity that dirt would otherwise facilitate by projecting a prepackaged, postemotional (Mestrovic 1997) logic onto dirty others. Such logic articulates the presence of dirty others as helpable (or cleanable)—i.e., as a systemically manageable problem, rather than as collectively repressed, systemic waste.

Yet we should not assume that interaction with and acceptance of the downtrodden always occurs through such duplicitous means. A primary thesis of this argument is that experiential understanding may follow from the experience of dirt. One does not have to repress or clean away dirt; rather, she may creatively reintegrate it into her everyday praxis. In this circumstance, one eclipses or forgoes socially mediated boundaries of experience. Consequently, the Dirty need not remain socially less than. An openness to the *dirty Other*, then, is an openness to (and reintegration of) discordant experience.

Before we further unpack the theoretical implications of this claim, however, we need to address the notion of otherness, which—like dirt—seems to imply a concern for boundaries. Steven Seidman suggests that

> An elaborated account of otherness assumes a social world that is symbolically divided into two antagonistic orders: a symbolic-moral order conferring full personhood and a respected civil status and its antithesis, a defiled order. (2012: 4)

To maintain continuity with the present discussion, we should note that a symbolic order is part and parcel of an affective-experiential one. As I suggested in the previous chapter, the symbolic is not mutually exclusive from the affective. Obviously, the defiled order corresponds to our present understanding of dirt; its operations challenge systemic fantasies of purity.

Seidman continues:

> The civil/defilement symbolic divide assumes politics of managing the fluid borderlands separating these orders. Border politics are at the heart of the sociology of the Other. Figures of difference become Other if they are symbolically associated with a condition of excess and ungovernability. The Other is represented not merely as deficient or eccentric, but as defiled or fundamentally debased and grotesque. (4)

Not simply difference but an inability to achieve systemic integration, then, perpetuates the social practice of othering. The excess and ungovernability of which Seidman speaks points to a systemic deficiency or lack of efficacy. Such an Other represents a dangerous *outsider*; wherefore, her impediment to systemic functioning is the alien quality of her person.

Yet the dirty Other that concerns us presently does not demonstrate an alien quality, but rather an all too familiar one—a familiarity that threatens. Reflecting back

upon Douglas' writings, we recognize that dirt is not alien matter, but rather matter out of place. In making this point, Douglas wishes to emphasize the threatening presence dirt demonstrates toward the ordered world. But we could also recognize that though dirt disrupts systemic order, it comes from and remains a *familiar* part of the social system. Hairs in the bathroom sink and papers strewn about a desktop, after all, are not experientially unintelligible; rather, they are just off-putting. Dirt then represents a latent outcropping of systemic processes. Although this outcropping causes minor, periodic disruption, it is readily reintegrated into systemic praxes and fulfills an array of other societal needs. We might say—in opposition to Douglas—that while Dirt manifests as contentious praxis, it remains symbolically legitimate. Just as Kai Erikson (1961) demonstrates with the presence of crime, the presence of dirt reinforces sociocultural boundaries and justifies the presence of a managerial infrastructure, which provides employment and a means for curtailing dirt's troublesome nature.

But what about the systemic outcroppings that operate as waste—that which the social system fails to reintegrate? What kind of dirt and dirty Other are we left with then? I argue that such a dirty Other takes the status of shit; she represents matter so threatening an appropriate context cannot be found for her; hence, systemic repression takes the place of reintegration. What is frightening about her is not that she demonstrates an alien or non-normative character, but rather that her grotesqueness—i.e., that quality which makes her morally and aesthetically reprehensible—is all too familiar. To confront her is to confront one's own shit; to confront one's own shit is to confront the base, fantasy shattering reality of one's personhood.

Let us return to the hypothetical scenario in which I ask a student if she has considered committing suicide. In one figurative sense, I am asking her to confront the shit of her existence. What does she have to live for? In other words, why would she believe her life is worth living? Or what value does she have as a person? Having received the question, however, does not necessarily entail engagement with said question. She may circumvent an opportunity to confront the shit of her existence by acting defensively. If she is defensive, if she maintains her familiar experiential boundaries, she may deflect introspection into her dirty existence and project the horror of dirt onto my character. She may reason that I, her professor, am the one out of place, that I have an inappropriate understanding of the context. By employing such a defense, she maintains her experiential holism; her primary trust remains intact.

But what if she remains open to the experiential dirt facilitated by my provocative question? On the one hand, she becomes vulnerable to annihilation. Death by her own volition is now a real possibility and the meanings that constitute her being now require worth and justification. On the other hand, she may acquire a new sense of agency. Again, death by her own volition is now a real possibility! She may find that the meanings that presently constitute her being provide little if any sustenance (are without justification). Or she may endeavor to create or find new meaning. Consequently, what was an ostensibly fixed way of being in the world receives novel contours.

With that said, the present argument does not seek to answer or elaborate upon the Absurdist dictum: Is life worth living? Because the present argument seeks sociological insight we now bring the discussion of dirt, the dirtied other and shit back to

more systemic concerns. We may ask: What structural factors inhibit the potential for growth following experiential discordance? I have already alluded to one: in guarding against the traumatic, social praxis demonstrates a conservative bias by placing excessive constraint on the experiential; wherefore, our everyday rituals circumvent the potential for novel awareness. For example, many of us discard our daily waste in a ritualized manner that forgoes individual responsibility and meta-systemic reflection. Yet our waste can reemerge in perilous ways.

Recent "natural" disasters, such as hurricane Sandy, represent such experientially discordant events. One's acceptance and exploration of the discontinuity facilitated by events like Sandy may evolve into a new understanding and ritualistic disposition toward systemic waste. Again, we must remember that *understanding* implies more than having knowledge of. The knowledge that such crises are possible existed well before Sandy. But the experience of such events grounds scholarly abstractions. Now the organism has a direct sense of environmental peril. She need not maintain her primary trust defensively; she may forge new habitual praxes. (Although, her individual efforts—e.g., developing sustainable consumption habits—will do little to protect her from the ramifications of systemic waste.)

Another structural inhibition to experiential growth is the moral enterprise, which perpetuates the fetishization of dirt. As Howard S. Becker (1963) brings to our attention, these enterprises typically purport a narrative of continued progress, but never one of complete success. He explains that a culmination of its primary task would mean that the enterprise could no longer legitimate its continued existence and power. The moral

enterprise, then, has significant incentive to embellish the very problem it seeks to eliminate. As the public becomes more aware and afraid of said problem, the more willingly its members grant the moral enterprise power and resources.

In respect to shit, however, the moral enterprise confronts a precarious task. In one respect, shit constitutes a fantasized omnipotence that provokes a great deal of public fear. In another respect, however, shit constitutes repressed waste; the unearthing of which troubles the collective's fantasy of purity and its faith in systemic praxis. While we may acknowledge that moral opportunists gladly exploit the fear of all things dirty, they avoid involvement with shit (which by definition is unmanageable without significant systemic restructuring). The moral enterprise is not in the business of changing conventional praxis; rather, it typically seeks to protect the status quo. The presence of shit reflects a problem perpetuated by the system, not to the system. Consequently, a moral enterprise will operate as a hygienic order that represses, rather than corrects, the problem of shit.

With such orders, however, there is more at stake than organizational power and legitimacy; also at stake is an existential confidence in the system as is. Wherefore, these orders work to maintain a framework of meaning, specifically a pervasive ethos of purity. In other words, Becker's logic still holds if we relinquish an emphasis on rational, calculative action.[26] However, the more salience these orders generate around narratives of purity, the greater the phenomenological presence and power of shit; the

[26] In other words we are not examining the circumstance in which moral enterprises necessarily exploit or take advantage of public fears.

more clean and wholesome an object, idea or place is held, the more vulnerable said object, idea or place becomes to the powers of contamination. Despite their better efforts, hygienic orders cannot sustain the repressive fantasy of purity. The experiential will always spill beyond the parameters of the social system's symbolic structures. No one essentialist narrative of moral or aesthetic beauty will capture and stay honest to one's experience of the world. Experience remains unavoidably dirty.

Although I have suggested that habituated praxes demonstrates a conservative bias, it is by means of praxis that the organism can create new experiential boundaries. Praxis facilitates abreaction; through praxeological incorporation, the organism decathects the contaminating power of a dirty object; wherefore, the organism may transform dirt into experiential nectar. Such transformational praxes often follow from other moral accounts: environmental, counter cultural, academic, etc. Are we not, then, replacing one hygienic order with another? Perhaps we are, but in so doing we can move away from fantasies of purity and their subsequent implications. Thus, a praxis and concomitant fantasy that seeks to transform systemic waste or shit—rather than eradicate it—is a step in the right direction.

For this to occur, however, the sociocultural infrastructure must permit opportunities for systemic openness to that which horrifies; only then can a culture understand and assimilate the morally, aesthetically and symbolically aberrant. Such an infrastructure must seek a dialog with the experiential and provide a space for experiential play. However, neither "opportunities for systemic openness" nor "experiential play" imply radical acceptance. I employ openness here to mean a

negotiated space in which new realities, new ways to experience the world, are possible (but not inevitable). Likewise, I use the metaphor of play to suggest a liminal process in which institutions undertake the creative fantasizing necessary to explore new ways of being in the world while distancing these experimental realities from an immediate influence on "the serious life."

As of now it may be the case that recondite abstractions inundate the present articulation of experiential discontinuity and subsequent transformation. To remedy this, the next chapter addresses two experientially concrete accounts, Camus' novel, *The Stranger* and the United States Courts Martial transcript of Specialist Steven A. Ribordy, to help facilitate greater conceptual clarity. In the former account, the reader confronts a systemically alien other, Meursault. The praxis he employs, after all, seems antithetical to conventional understanding; that is to say, his demeanor contrasts with the social decorum. As such, Meursault's actions may not constitute dirt in the "all too familiar sense" of which I spoke previously. But is he an experientially alien Other? Even if the reader cannot identify with Meursault's personal sensibilities, she may demonstrate a familiar understanding of the distance Meursault experiences between his personal feelings and those feelings that others expect of him. For this reason, I find that Meursault fits the epistemological classification of shit.

Addressing the latter account, the reader confronts an exemplary dirty Other, Specialist Ribordy. As will be made clear, Ribordy serves as the quintessential example of systemic waste or shit. The peril that his presence commands is the base familiarity he represents. To be specific, Ribordy represents a systemic inability to guide a well-

intentioned subject away from moral (or legal) misfortune. Ribordy's experience with The Department of Military Justice characterizes the aforementioned practices of systemic denial and repression.

CHAPTER IV

DIRTY ACCOUNTS AND LEGAL PURITY: THE FORMAL OBFUSCATION OF EXPERIENTIAL DISCONTINUITY

A Familiar Stranger?

Meursault—the protagonist of Camus'(1942) classic novel The Stranger—demonstrates a demeanor that is ostensibly antithetical to the conventional trope of a folk hero. When norm or custom calls for a showing of sympathy or remorsefulness, Meursault demonstrates disinterest and callousness. Such is the case when Meursault speaks of his mother's death. He narrates, "Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know" (3). Though the reader may wish to characterize Meursault as one who is amoral, she will likely find that such a characterization is contextually inappropriate. Despite her reluctance to identify with Meursault, the reader cannot deny that he remains genuine amongst duplicitous others. Perhaps this is a disposition she understands well—an understanding which lends Meursault's presence an uncanny, and thereby uncomfortable, familiarity.

Furthermore, it is his very authenticity that complicates Meursault's existence within the cultural milieu, within the social system. This system impinges upon Meursault's symbolic-affective constitution in such a way that the potential for experiential reductionism and violence upon his person is great. We see such implications when the court demands Meursault *account* for why he killed the Arab. Meursault—speaking to the affective-experiential intelligibility of the event—explains,

"…it was because of the sun" (103). What Meursault tries to convey here is an affective experience that has an intelligibility of its own accord. Although his answer is, arguably, as sincere as it can be, the court administrators laugh at the account and, thereby, refuse to give it sincere consideration.

The court's formal operations lack appropriate epistemological equipment for understanding that which is conventionally and analytically unintelligible. Systemic justice, then, requires a reason that fits, or is made to fit, within the normative order of things. Deflecting and repressing Meursault's reasoning—which does not adhere to the logic of systemic morality, but rather the embodied intonations emerging from a situational reflexivity—the court administrators label Meursault pathological and ill-willed. They cite the ostensible callousness he demonstrated toward his mother's death, a matter far removed from the crime at hand. Such action demonstrates their desperate reach for a fantastic certitude to ground their moral understanding and action.

Because Meursault's existence so embodies the systemically unintelligible, his very presence disturbs both the symbolic structure of and the experiential flow facilitated by the court's legal proceedings. Meursault's presence, then, demonstrates the character of a stranger. With that said, he is a not simply an alien other; rather, his presence represents the return of a repressed, primordial understanding that operates outside of socialized, moral dictates. In this respect his presence demonstrates the power of shit. Because the court administrators cannot make sense of (i.e., cannot employ legal logic toward) Meursault's account, they are unable to situate it within an appropriate legal category and effectively clean it away. So how do the administrator's handle

Meursault's account? They deny it. Though they have no reason to doubt what he says, they repress his testimony; as concerns the law, Meursault's experience did not happen. We are left with a courtroom fantasy that obfuscates the shit presence that Meursault demonstrates. The administrators project onto to him a misanthropic villain who deserves nothing less than state sanctioned death. The court then operates as a hygienic order which denies genuine communication with contaminating experience.

Before we discontinue our discussion of Meursault's case, we should acknowledge that the priest, a socio-cultural arbiter for systemic morality, provides Meursault with an opportunity to relinquish his association with shit (at least for a projection of an omnipotent Other, God). By imploring Meursault to seek absolution in faith, the priest pushes him to accept and repent for his guilt. If Meursault heeds the Priest's admonitions, he may take on the status of one who is dirty, yet cleanable—i.e., one who reinforces the systemic morality. But Meursault embraces the shitty essence of his experience, and he allows his filthy way to spill about and muck up the systemic machinery. Not his acts or his opinions, then, but rather his very being becomes the dirt or shit that fouls up the system. By remaining unrepentant, he inhibits the social system's ability to maintain fantasies of purity, of moral efficacy in matters of moral ineptitude.

The Repressive Cleansing of Experience

We can make an apt comparison between Meursault's case and the courts-martial of Specialist Steven A. Ribordy. The United States Military Justice System charged

Ribordy and four other U.S. soldiers with conspiracy to murder five Iraqi detainees during active duty in Iraq in the Spring of 2007 (an event the media has labeled "Killings at the Canal" (CNN 2009)). Specialist Ribordy, however, did not kill anyone, nor did he have prior knowledge that the members of his unit were going to execute Iraqi detainees. What Ribordy did do is follow orders, which instructed him to drive a military vehicle to a site specified to be holding said detainees.[27] Upon his arrival, however, Ribordy finds the detainees dead. His commanding officers then instruct him to help his peers discard the dead into the canal.

> During his courts-martial trial, Ribordy delineates the experience as follows:
>
> There hadn't been too much time that went by when we got told that we were going out again. At the time I didn't think anything was unusual because we would roll out for anything….
>
> After leaving the [command observation post] I asked what we were doing and why we were leaving and everything. First Sergeant responded that we were going to go take care of these guys. At the time I didn't know quite what it meant, but I… was a PV2 at the time, I don't question a first sergeant. So I just followed the patrol and did what I was told to…. [Upon arrival] I was told to… pull security by first sergeant. So I complied….
>
> A little bit of time passed and I had to get out of the truck and use the bathroom. When I stepped out of the truck… I saw three Soldiers…. When I walked up I saw that it was First Sergeant Hatley,… Sergeant First Class Mayo, and Sergeant Leahy…. I approached and as I got a little bit closer I saw… there was three bodies right in front of them. And it was the individuals that we had detained earlier. There was the smell of fresh gunshot, guns being fired, in the air. And there was a lot of blood and--on the ground, right where the bodies lay. Yeah, I recognized that the individuals were from the photos that I had taken and then I remembered that First Sergeant said that "we were going to go take care of these guys.
>
> At first I only saw the three bodies laying there, so I walked up and all I wanted to do was get out of there. That way nobody could get caught or

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[27] It is important to note that Ribordy's orders involve more than formal or authoritative stipulations. Concomitant with these orders are a set of trained habits, which specify where and how to park a military vehicle, where and when to serve as a look-out, etc.

> anything like that. I just wanted to get on. As I helped move one of the bodies into the canal, I saw the other body that had already been placed in the canal. After I moved that body, I walked back to the truck. I got in. Shut the door. Closed my mouth. Didn't say a word. And that's when I really remembered, you know, and I put two and two together that "we're going to go take care of these guys," meant we were going to go kill them.[28]

Ribordy's account seems to demonstrate a thorough attentiveness to the experiential flow of the events in question. However, the court cannot accept his initial articulation of the matter; his account—in the context of a systemic legal structure—takes the form of symbolic and experiential dirt. The primary contaminant transforming the account from systemically clean to aberrant is Ribordy's narrative absence of a definitive moment of awareness or understanding that he had colluded in a premeditated plan to kill the detainees.

With that said, we could say that Ribordy's account, like Meursault's, acquires the status of shit. After all, if Ribordy's experience is one in which he does not demonstrate definitive, analytical understanding of a decision to participate in a conspiracy to kill detainees or even to break military protocol then his presence represents a problem for which no clear systemic route of action is apparent. But the legal authority cannot acknowledge the systemic shit, which confusing matters of war produce. To do so would undermine the collective's fantasy of purity as it pertains to an organized war effort, an efficacious command climate and the integrity of moral guidelines for combat.

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[28] This passage is a direct quotation from the record of trial of The United States Courts-Martial of Specialist Steven A. Ribordy (U.S. Military Justice System 2008). As for the quotations presented throughout the remainder of this section, the reader may assume that they too are from this transcript.

Accordingly, the court requests (under the threat of severe sanction) that Ribordy adjust his account to better fit a particular verdict. In other words, the courts-martial needs Ribordy to articulate a definitive motive and decision to kill and thereby clean up his account to better adhere to the symbolic logic of legal-rational categories. Otherwise, the charge, "conspiracy to commit premeditated murder," loses meaning and Ribordy's exact culpability in the matter is unclear. Now it may seem that Ribordy has a legal advantage, that by refusing to adjust his account he can exploit the shortcomings of the legal-rational framework. In Ribordy's case, however, the trial proceedings and outcome are predicated upon a prefabricated narrative of the event in question.

The military legal structure is able to coerce Ribordy's compliance—and therefore maintain the systemic fantasy of purity—with a particular cleansing mechanism, the pretrial agreement. This particular legal device operates as a contract in which trial proceedings follow the direction of a previously agreed upon legal theory. The court gives Ribordy strong incentive to accept a pretrial agreement. To quote the Military Judge, "…[Ribordy] gets the benefit of whichever is less, each element of the sentence of the court or that contained in… [the] pre-trial agreement, which is eight months imprisonment."

Now if Ribordy refuses to adjust the initial (legally unclear) account of his experience, the pretrial deal becomes null and void. The military judge states, "If for some reason your plea of guilty at any time becomes unacceptable, the trial counsel will be free to proceed on all of the charges and specifications." This means that the case will go to trial by military judge and no jury if Ribordy's account in any way contests the

pretrial deal. In the event that such a trial occurs, it would commence during the immediate proceeding. Within this new circumstance, the conspiracy to commit premeditated murder would again be in effect and Ribordy's admittance of guilt for accessory after the fact to premeditated murder would still stand.

Furthermore, Ribordy's prior admittance makes any decision to renege on the pretrial agreement legally irrelevant. The judge states, "A plea of guilty is equivalent to a conviction and is the strongest form of proof known to the law. On your plea alone and without receiving any evidence, this court can find you guilty of the offense to which you have pled guilty." Also in the event of a new trial, mandatory minimum sentencing laws bind the Judge's ruling. If he finds Ribordy guilty, the Judge must give him a sentence of life in prison without parole. As is now obvious, the pretrial agreement compels Ribordy to remain committed to the pre-constructed narrative.

Yet the pretrial agreement is not the only mechanism maintaining systemic fantasies of purity. The court proceedings constitute an elaborate set of rituals that also serve this function. For example, Before the judge permit's Ribordy to testify he socializes him to the court's symbolic logic. He methodically explains how Ribordy should organize and interpret his experience within legal parameters.

> You can be guilty as an accessory after the fact only if, in addition to all other elements of the offense:
>
> First, that four male detainees are dead; [This is actually an interesting point because no bodies were ever discovered. There is no physical evidence that the crime was committed.]
>
> Second, that their deaths resulted from the acts of First Sergeant John E. Hatley, Sergeant First Class Joseph P. Mayo, and Sergeant Michael P. Leahy Jr.
>
> Third, that the killings of the four male detainees were unlawful; and

> Fourth, that at the time of the killings First Sergeant John E. Hatley, Sergeant First Class Joseph P. Mayo, and Sergeant Michael P. Leahy Jr. had a premeditated design to kill the four male detainees.

We may acknowledge that the last point illustrates that Ribordy's guilt is contingent upon the guilt of the "co-accused." If the court cannot establish premeditation—e.g., if the court cannot show that at the time of the incident the co-accused were "aware" that they followed unlawful orders—then Ribordy cannot be guilty of conspiracy to commit premeditated murder.[29]

Consequently, Ribordy's intentions and actions during the event in question are not as legally significant in determining his guilt as those of the co-accused. Wherefore, we further see the Judge help Ribordy interpret his experience in a way that confirms, or at least suggests, the fulfillment of the aforementioned stipulations for premeditation to commit murder to be a valid charge.

> MJ: Now I want to talk about what you knew. Most of the questions I just went through all had to deal with whether or not a crime, in fact, occurred. Did you know that First Sergeant Hatley, Sergeant First Class Mayo, and Sergeant Leahy committed premeditated murder of the four detainees?
> ACC: Yes I did, Your Honor.
> MJ: At what point did you know that?
> ACC: As I approached.
> MJ: What do you mean by, "as you approached"?
> ACC: As I--after I got out of the vehicle and I started moving to their location, that's when I knew that they had committed the murders.
> MJ: You had mentioned earlier that it wasn't until you got back to your HMMWV--after that, that you put two and two together?
> ACC: I misspoke, Your Honor… I realized what they had done when I got up there and prior to me helping them move the bodies.

[29] The reader should note that at the time of Ribordy's hearing the co-accused are still awaiting trial.

If we juxtapose this last part of the passage with Ribordy's first account, that is the account that was not produced in a piecemeal fashion following the MJ's questions, we see something interesting. In the first account, Ribordy delineates his experience as follows:

> Yeah, I recognized that the individuals were from the photos that I had taken and then I remembered that First Sergeant said that "we were going to go take care of these guys." At first I only saw the three bodies laying there, so I walked up and all I wanted to do was get out of there. That way nobody could get caught or anything like that.

In this passage it seems as if Ribordy acknowledges the moral dubiousness of the event, but he does not specify the exact problem. He continues:

> I just wanted to get on. As I helped move one of the bodies into the canal, I saw the other body that had already been placed in the canal. After I moved that body, I walked back to the truck. I got in. Shut the door. Closed my mouth. Didn't say a word. And that's when I really remembered, you know, and I put two and two together that "we're going to go take care of these guys," meant we were going to go kill them.

Although Ribordy indicates that the situation has become experientially concrete to him, it is still difficult for the listener (and reader) to determine the specific point at which Ribordy comes to a holistic understanding of the circumstance. The admission, "And that's when I really remembered," suggests an understanding that achieves holism retrospectively.

Now when we see the second attempt to recapture the event in question (i.e., the modified account that Ribordy gives in response to the judge's specific questions) the story appears cleaner. The Military Judge asks, "You had mentioned earlier that it wasn't until you got back to your HMMWV--after that, that you put two and two together?" And Ribordy responds, "I misspoke, Your Honor. I put—I realized what they

had done when I got up there and prior to me helping them move the bodies." To fully understand the significance of his response, we should remember that the pretrial agreement binds Ribordy to a specific articulation of his account—one that maintains the legitimacy of a guilty plea.

Dirt and Agency

Having acknowledged that dirt is disruptive, we may now note that cleaning or organizing the dirtied facilitates practical action (Dant and Bowles 2003). We may also acknowledge that formal codes and procedures designed to remove dirt facilitate collective agency. After all, dirt is troublesome. Why, then, should the Military Justice System not channel Ribordy's account into specific articulations? If the court does not contort and confine his account, how is The Military Justice System to make any decision on and take subsequent action toward Ribordy's possible wrong doing? This is a fair question, but it makes two fallacious assumptions. First, we need not assume that effective or moral action can follow only from "clean," analytical reasoning. Second, we need not assume that the patterned nature of systemic logic is inherently antagonistic toward the, at times, idiosyncratic nature of experiential understanding.

Addressing the first assumption, we may acknowledge that sociology has long established the dangers of conflating "clean," analytical reason or inflexible logic with morality. Such an idea demonstrates an implicit, if not explicit premise, in the works of Max Weber (1922), Zygmunt Bauman (1989), George Ritzer (2004) and many others. As sociologists, then, we understand that social life is infinitely complex; no rule or

category can capture the nuance of experiential existence.[30] Consequently, any absolute measure for gauging the experiential world perpetuates a system of violence. It is beyond the scope of this argument to cover the full spectrum of such violence; suffice it to say that general adherence to such mechanisms represents what Zygmunt Bauman (1995) refers to as procedural morality: an obligation to a rule or procedure that devalues humanistic sensibilities.

Bauman's postulate presents us with another question: What are the alternatives to procedural morality? As I have demonstrated in the introduction to this dissertation, the late modernity theorists attempt to present us with several such possibilities: the pure relationship (1991a; 1991b), a being-for the other disposition (Bauman 1995; 2001), and the cosmopolitan conscience (Beck 1996; 1998; 2000; 2002). These concepts represent well intentioned alternatives to conventional morality. Yet I argue that these ideas rest upon a faulty epistemological assumption, the understanding that social relationships can or should be pure. For Bauman (1995) and Giddens (1991a; 1991b), this purity pertains to a social communion that exists outside of convention, custom, normality and the like.

Bauman elaborates that in such a circumstance—what he refers to as Being-for the other—individuals engage one another as whole selves. That is to say, if individuals can relinquish or transcend conventional dictates, the whole self is able to emerge from and within a specific interaction. Anthony Giddens makes a similar claim. He suggests the late modern age holds the potential for the "*pure relationship*: a social relation which

[30] Hence, the difficulty of being a theorist.

is internally referential, that is, depends fundamentally on satisfactions or rewards generic to that relation itself" (1991a: 244 emphasis added). Both Bauman and Giddens argue that these pure relations emerge from late modernity's institutional instability. They explain that the institutional base is longer capable of grounding ideological reference points; wherefore, situational interaction itself becomes the point of reference.

Although I hold that the contemporary age constitutes a plethora of ephemeral, contradicting and confusing narratives, I have not witnessed, nor do I foresee the emergence of social interaction—if I may use a euphemism—without external baggage. Likewise, I—as a psychoanalytic scholar—cannot give the notion of the "pure" relationship any sincere credence. The epistemological foundation upon which my theoretical scaffolding rests is the idea that one's embodied subjectivity always and necessarily constitutes her life-history. Part and parcel of this history are the cultural contexts one has traversed throughout her life-course.

Yet, we must acknowledge that these theorists touch upon a legitimate point. The individual can, at times, operate outside of conventional dictates. Both Meursault and Ribordy, for example, adopted noninstitutionalized, systems of morality based on loyalty to the present experience. Yet do such men and such acts fall under the purview of what Ulrich Beck (2002) refers to as a "cosmopolitan conscience"? We may remember from the introduction to this dissertation that said conscience seeks to incorporate the "otherness" of the other. Meursault murdered a man who posed no immediate threat to him. In so doing, he demonstrates radical authenticity. The irony is that while authenticity is a conventional value, in practice it may very well appear

abhorrent to the conventional sensibility. Furthermore, our theoretical endeavors often take for granted that the authentic act will present itself as noble and praiseworthy.

With that said, social science on the whole could mitigate some of its naive assumptions by looking to psychoanalysis. One of the pinnacle contributions of psychoanalytic discourse is the idea that the authentic does not represent the transcendence of a vulgar human condition; rather, it represents a liberated acceptance of said condition. On this point, we should acknowledge that Meursault and Ribordy are not sadistic men; yet their actions are far removed from the Heinz dilemma[31]. The question before us, then, is: how do we, our institutions, incorporate the "otherness" of morally or aesthetically unpalatable others? I do not have a satisfying answer to this question. Though we may acknowledge that systemic repression exacerbates the problem and power of dirt, we may also acknowledge that institutional integration of the dirty will likely entail systemic discordance.

I do, however, suggest that the embodied experience serve as a referential measure for moral and aesthetic decisions concerning social existence. Such a reference point is one choice among others. That which is moral, as I employ said concept, mitigates experiential violence and facilitates experiential growth; moral acts attempt to bridge experiential discontinuity so that the organism can circumvent the hazard of trauma and adapt to a new mode of experience (establish a new sense of trust).

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[31] The Heinz dilemma refers to a moral puzzle developed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) to test moral reasoning. It presents a hypothetical scenario in which Heinz requires medicine for his sick, but does not have the money to pay for it. The moral question at hand then is should Heinz steal the medicine.

At this stipulation, the reader may protest: Are the systemic actions taken against Meursault and Ribordy not representative of the systemic attempt to mitigate or circumvent experiential discontinuity and subsequent violence that the mere presence of Meursault and Ribordy create for the normative order? These men, after all, challenge the collective fantasy that portrays the experiential universe as safe, well ordered and manageable. With that said, the reader—if only to play devil's advocate—may inquire: Why should we not treat Meursault and Ribordy as sacrificial lambs? Their stories challenge our shared understandings and collective efficacy. Why not, then, permit violence upon a few to ensure the comfort of the many?

The answer is that experiential discontinuity, in and of itself, need not be traumatic. Experience will always be dirty. The experiential, by its nature, spills over and undermines cultural constructs and concomitant habitudes. "Deflection of," then, is not as effective as "adaption to" experiential discordance and the emergence of new experiential understanding. Furthermore, our efforts at repression reveal glaring contradictions and deficiencies within our social structural machinery; our fantasies of purity become increasingly absurd as systemic authorities attempt to maintain cultural values of justice through the dubious means of a pretrial agreement. Consequently, modes of social protection take on an anomic character; an insatiable need for comfort and security promotes deranged social arrangements.

Experiential Growth

What then is experiential growth? At the institutional level, growth refers to how the institutional structure changes in a way that better enables organisms to achieve affective-experiential integration (achieve primary trust) with the sociocultural environment. However, the character of institutionalized ethos is such that organisms often experience its codification as inflexible and affectively unreasonable. If an institution fails to take on the character of a living, breathing organism that needs to adapt and grow, it will succumb to inertia and cease to be functional for the cells (individuals) that make up its constitution. The dynamism of both the organism's experiential constitution and the structural constitution of the environment necessitates that the relationship between the two will come into discord. In the event that the organism does not (or cannot) adapt to a particular structural circumstance, the disjuncture between organism's affective constitution and environment may manifest as a tension that builds without relief.

One problematic praxis responsible for such maladaptation is the institutionalization of purity. Although this particular value has inundated all facets of social existence, in practice it remains unsustainable. Narratives of purity exacerbate symbolic alienation. The organism's experiential understanding does not align with purity's symbolic logic. If we, as a collective, can relinquish the desire for and fantasy of systemic purity, then we can develop structures that adapt to experiential needs—structures which do not attempt to clean experiential dirt, but rather make use of it. A praxis that forgoes purity better equips the organism to confront and work through

discordant experiences. Wherefore, such a praxis promotes, rather than hinders, primary trust.

New Directions for Future Research

Scholars may employ the ideas developed throughout this dissertation in a number of different avenues of research. The concept of the dirty Other, for example, expands discussions of otherness beyond a concern for the non-normative or a politics of difference. Specifically, the dirty Other (or shit) concerns a systemic repression of the familiar, yet troubling subject or object. In the present work, I apply this concept to highlight how legal formalities and procedures deflect and repress aberrant experiential accounts to obfuscate systemic shortcomings. Future studies, however, may apply this concept to other social problems and institutions.

An apt subject for analysis is liquid modern society's relationship to a growing trash burden. Edward Humes (2012) notes, "Trash is such a big part of daily life that American communities spend more on waste management than on fire protection, parks and recreation, libraries or schoolbooks. If it were a [commercial] product, trash would surpass everything else we manufacture." A researcher may inquirer, then, what the role of waste management entails in relation to the larger social world. Does trash itself represent a dirty Other? Does systemic repression obfuscate and perpetuate the growing problem of trash? Does said problem undermine the organism's primary trust in a consumption driven environing?

Perhaps one might apply the concept of the dirty Other to the advent of germ theory. One may argue that with the recognition of the widespread existence of microorganisms, modern culture promulgated a phobic disposition towards the everyday world. David S. Barnes (2004) historical comparative analysis of the sewage crises in London and Paris in the late 1880s insinuates such a relationship. He argues that Louis Pasteur's promulgation of germ theory served as a hindrance to the Parisian Government's ability to undertake swift and effective action toward meliorating the city's sewage problems. He elaborates that the introduction of bacteriological knowledge presented Parisian officials with a newfound danger, complicating their understanding of what "safe," appropriate action entailed. We, following Barnes' lead, may surmise that the invisibility and ubiquity of microbes bolsters their threatening presence. The body's permeability and vulnerability acquires a newfound salience. Future studies may explore these stipulations empirically. Specifically, a researcher might investigate the prevalence and latent consequences of germ management in everyday praxis.

Returning to a consideration for Ribordy's experience with the Military Justice System, we may acknowledge the need for a discussion about the influence of legal logical and processes upon Ribordy's memory. Research shows that memories are highly malleable and susceptible to external influences (Freud 1899; Siegel 1999; Loftus 2005). Wherefore, one may investigate how legal proceedings operate in a way that potentially distorts not only experiential accounts, but actual memories of the events in question.

Furthermore, we should acknowledge that Ribordy's circumstance is not wholly unique. A number of other soldiers accused of wrong doing face the same or similar legal cleansing processes. Stjepan Mestrovic (2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2012) and others (Caldwell 2012; Caldwell and Mestrovic 2008; Mestrovic and Caldwell 2010; Mestrovic and Lorenzo 2008; Romero and Mestrovic 2012) have produce a great amount of research on the subject of war crimes and the military's systemic inadequacies. Nevertheless, new cases continue to emerge and further study is still appropriate. Such research is not only timely, but may contribute to potential, systemic restructuring of the Military Justice System.[32] Also, the need for research regards the military's systemic inadequacies extends beyond the legal system. There are now more Iraq and Afghanistan veteran suicides than there are U.S. soldier casualties from active duty in Iraq and Afghanistan (Pilkington 2013). Such a comparison reveals the need to explore and critique the processes of existing the battlefield and reentering (or reintegration with) civilian living. The concepts I develop in chapter two may be of use towards this end. One may investigate how present day institutions are failing to facilitate the soldier's ability to achieve experiential growth and primary trust—embodied processes that mitigate the effects of trauma.

Having acknowledged several avenues of possible research, we must not forget that the body and the embodied experience play a key role in social on-goings. The researcher's failure to centralize these concepts in an analysis of social processes may

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[32] We may note that Dr. Mestrovic has not only served as an expert witness for many of the present day War Crime trials (see Mestrovic 2007; 2008; 2010a; 2010b), but has also consulted the Military Justice System about its systemic inadequacies (United States Department of Defense 2013).

lead her astray in several distinct ways. Firstly, the researcher may mistakenly recognize a lack of structural constraint or order as an opportunity for agentic action. As I have already alluded to throughout this dissertation, lack of structure does not necessarily bode well for the embodied experience. When a cultural narrative reveals itself as contradictory, the organism may not experience such a circumstance with a sense of liberation and possibility; rather, she may respond defensively with denial and fear. Secondly, the researcher may inappropriately regard the embodied experience as something the organism can or should circumvent. If we accept that the embodied experience is the modus operandi of human existence, we must acknowledge that agentic action occurs through, not in spite of, affective processes. In other words, we may acknowledge that the organism employs her affective constitution as an adaptive force within and throughout social intercourse. Lastly, the researcher may overemphasize the cognitive-analytic process of the mind and mentation and thereby obfuscate the presence and significance of an affective intelligibility. In such a circumstance, the researcher may inappropriately conflate lack of analytical knowledge for lack of experiential understanding. I have already argued that these concepts refer to distinct processes and have different consequences for subsequent action. With that said, I conclude this dissertation with the following stipulation: neither self nor society emerge, first and foremost, as an affair of symbolic identities; rather, they emerge, first and foremost, as an affair of corporealities.

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